

الْقُرْآنُ الْكَرِيمُ  
وَكَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعَلْيَا

THE  
**ASCENDANT QUR'AN**  
*Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture*

VOLUME 5  
Āl 'Imrān:121–200



Muḥammad Ḥ. al-Āṣī





In the Name of Allah,  
the Mercy-Giving, the Merciful



THE  
ASCENDANT QUR'AN

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*Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture*

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Āl 'Imrān:121–200

Muḥammad H. al-Āṣī

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT  
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Allah (ﷻ) says in His noble Book,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

“Verily, Allah and His Angels send salutations on the Apostle.  
O You who are firmly committed [to Allah], you too [must]  
send the most worthy salutations and blessings upon him.”  
(Sūrah al-Aḥzāb:56)

In launching this *tafsīr*, we beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless His final Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ), all the Prophets (ﷺ) who preceded him, and all those who, despite great difficulty and sacrifice, sincerely follow in their footsteps from the *ṣāliḥūn*, the *ṣiddiqūn*, the *shuhadā'*, and *marḥūmūn*. We also beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless and amply reward those who have helped in the publication of this *tafsīr* in whatever capacity.

— The Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought





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## Publisher's Foreword

It is Allah's (ﷻ) *sunnah* to put His faithful servants through trials and tribulations as they journey in this wayward world toward their ultimate destination to meet the Creator. These trials can range from loss of employment, loss of home, or even loss of a loved one. On a different level altogether, some of Allah's (ﷻ) finest may face unjust imprisonment, leading in most cases to prolonged periods of torture. Examples of this kind abound throughout the world from the torture chambers of oppressive regimes in the Muslim world to such gulags as Guantanamo Bay (in Cuba) and Bagram (in Afghanistan). Innocent Muslims are kept in cages fit for animals and mercilessly tortured only because they are faithful to Allah (ﷻ), His covenant, and His final Prophet (ﷺ). If Muslims show patience and are steadfast in the face of such adversities, Allah (ﷻ) declares, “...it is they who have proved themselves true, and it is they, they who are consciously defensive [vis-à-vis Allah's power]” (2:177).

The verbal declaration that one has committed to Allah (ﷻ) is not enough; it must be validated by a sense of urgency that places the committed servants in an unsettling domain where the worldly

odds are against them, so that those who merely give lip-service to Allah (ﷻ) and make a ritual show of their attachment can be exposed and thereby cleansed from the ranks of the sincere and struggling covenant-bearers. Even the Prophets of Allah (ﷺ) were not excluded from such traumatizing tests, although their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) was never in doubt. It may be asked: why did the Prophets and Messengers of Allah (ﷺ) have to go through such difficulties? The simple answer is that the struggle for justice in the human condition against the combined forces of *kufr* and *tāghūt* is not a walk in the park, even for Prophets (ﷺ). However to see first hand the finest human beings ever created put their lives on the line for justice liberates that dormant social momentum in ordinary human beings, who without the benefit of Allah's (ﷻ) guidance and the struggle of His Prophets (ﷺ), would have been incapable of getting a measure of their aggregate capacities to change an oppressive condition into a better one.

In the noble Qur'an, Allah (ﷻ) reminds us,

**Do people imagine that on their [mere] saying, "We have made a secure commitment [to Allah]," they will be left to themselves, and will not be tested with affliction? Lo! We did test those who lived before them; and so, [too, shall be tested the people now living; and] most certainly will Allah mark out those who prove themselves true, and most certainly will He mark out those who are lying (29:2–3).**

In *Sūrah Āl 'Imrān*, Allah (ﷻ) makes clear what is expected of committed Muslims,

**Do you reckon that you will enter Paradise while Allah has yet to verify your struggle [in His cause], and to verify your patience in adversity? For, indeed, you did long for death [in Allah's cause] before you came face to face with it, and now you have seen it with your own eyes! (3:142–143).**

As we study and reflect on the second part of *Sūrah Āl 'Imrān* (āyāt 121–200) — the subject of this fifth volume of the *tafsīr*, *The Ascendant Qur'an* — we find precisely this test that the first-generation Muslims were put through in the early period of their life-struggle in Madinah. They had experienced an unexpected but brilliant victory at Badr (2AH), made all the more remarkable by the fact that hitherto Muslims had not been tested in battle. Further, between them, they had very few weapons and war materiel — swords, spears, horses, camels, etc. — to confront a heavily-armed adversary that was three times larger than their total number of 313. Such disparity in numbers would prove disheartening for the bravest of souls but not the committed Muslims.

The victory at Badr naturally enhanced and consolidated the confidence of Muslims, attracting many fence-sitters into the fold of Islam. The world is full of people that always want to be on the winning side; such people have no fixed ideology or commitment, and serve to dilute, or even nullify, the future gains of those who have committed to carrying the covenant. The setback of Uḥud, though painful and jolting, was the body cleansing tonic needed to separate the truly committed from those that were merely pretending to be Muslims: the *munāfiqs*. Uḥud also clarified several other principles, three of which are,

1. victory is not automatically guaranteed to Muslims, even those led by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), especially if they subvert their struggle in the cause of Allah (ﷻ) by fighting for worldly gain or prominence;
2. all people required to potentially sacrifice their lives in a battle must be consulted ahead of time in a participatory forum whose results are binding on all concerned parties, even the Prophet (ﷺ); and
3. battlefield engagements between Muslims and *mushriks* are always preceded by several rounds of psychological warfare to lower the morale of Muslims.

Furthermore, as if losing the battle was not enough, the Muslims had to suffer the anguish of putting their beloved Messenger (ﷺ) in

a position to be injured or even killed (as a rumor had spread to this effect in the most demanding moments of Uḥud). The Qur'anic *āyāt* came from on high to refocus such attitude,

**But Muhammad is only a messenger who was preceded by [other] messengers [who also passed away]; so if he dies or is killed will you retreat and fall back? And whoever does so shall not in the least do harm to Allah [but rather to himself], and Allah will make compensations for those who are thankful. And no human being can die save by Allah's leave, at a term preordained. And if one desires the rewards of this world, We shall grant him thereof; and if one desires the rewards of the life to come, We shall grant him thereof; and We shall requite those who are grateful [to Us]. And how many a prophet has had to fight [in Allah's cause], followed by many God-devoted men; and they did not become faint of heart for all that they had to suffer in Allah's cause, and neither did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves [before the enemy], since Allah loves those who are patient in adversity (3:144–146).**

This *sūrah* clarifies for us different categories of people. First, there are the truly committed Muslims that have made their covenant with Allah (ﷻ) in return for reward in the *ākhirah*. No challenge is too great for them to overcome nor is the degree of oppression unleashed against them sufficient to cow them. Allah (ﷻ) Himself refers to such people as *mu'mins* in the noble Qur'an. They are addressed by the special acclamation, *al-ladhina āmanū*, and given the felicity that if they uphold the covenant, they will receive Allah's (ﷻ) grace and ever-lasting mercy. In Uḥud, this group of Muslims stood with the noble Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) throughout the battle in obedience to his command, whether it was during the euphoria of the initial victory or during the reversal that occurred after the archers deserted their strategic positions on the elevation next to Mt. Uḥud.



The second category includes people that have accepted Islam but have not completely abandoned worldly desires. This group comprised some of the archers that the noble Messenger (ﷺ) had placed on the hill to prevent the enemy from attacking the Muslim ranks from the rear. They were given clear instructions not to vacate their posts under any circumstances even if the Muslims were being killed by the enemy. When the tide of battle turned in favor of the Muslims and the Makkan *mushriks* started to flee, all but 10 of the 50 archers decamped from their posts to join in collecting the war booty despite pleas from their companions not to do so, reminding them of the Messenger's (ﷺ) instructions. This lure of worldly possessions cost the Muslims dearly. A certain victory was turned into a severe setback — almost a rout — from which the remaining dedicated Muslims recovered only through the sagacity and wisdom of the noble Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

The lesson driven home to Muslims was that commitment to Allah (ﷻ) cannot be contaminated by worldly desires, no matter how attractive or seductive. There cannot be two competing centers of attraction for committed Muslims: either it is the love of Allah (ﷻ) or the love of the *dunyā*. Today, some Muslims naively ask in exacerbation: where is Allah's (ﷻ) promised help to Muslims as they face such horrendous threats and challenges from His enemies? Allah's (ﷻ) help is promised to those who make a firm commitment to Him, not the faint-hearted who have their eyes satiated by the leisures and pleasures of this world. The latter are the ones who fail to measure up to Allah's (ﷻ) high expectations, and thus are not worthy of His help and grace. **“So remember Me and I shall remember you; and be grateful unto Me, and deny Me not” (2:152)**, declares Allah (ﷻ) in His noble Book. The opposite is equally true: if we forget and abandon Allah (ﷻ), He will surely forget and abandon us. He has no need for us; only us for Him.

There was a third category — the *munāfiqs* — who had initially come out in battle formation with the Muslims, but on the way to Uḥud defected and turned back to Madinah. This group comprised some 300 people led by ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Sallūl, the chief of the *munāfiqs* in Madinah. There is no shortage of these Muslims of

convenience; they pretend to be Muslims but in reality give their allegiance to anyone who appears in their estimation to have more temporal power. They have no heartfelt commitment to Islam or its principles, but they are too cowardly to openly challenge the power of Islam for fear of incurring the righteous indignation of the sincerely striving Muslims. For all practical purposes, they are *mushriks*, indeed worse than *mushriks* because with the latter, Muslims are certain of their nature and identity. The *munāfiqs* are more dangerous than *mushriks* because they exist and operate within the ranks of Muslims and pretend to be Muslims when they are not.

The last and final category is that of the enemies of Allah (ﷻ). At the time of the noble Messenger (ﷺ), the chiefs of Makkah and their followers represented this class of people, motivated by greed, avarice, and the monopoly of power that comes with generational tribal solidarity. Today, this class is represented by imperialists and Zionists. They covet other people's resources — oil, land, minerals, etc. — and are even prepared to wage wars against them. Millions of people have been killed in their drive to acquire these riches. Human life has no meaning for them. In fact, the *mushriks* of Makkah had some admirable qualities: they were hospitable and lived according to a code of honor, however primitive. For instance, if they provided protection to someone, they would lay down their lives for that person. The vultures and parasites of today have no such scruples or values. They abandon their own values and stated principles when these do not suit their immediate self-proclaimed national interests. In this sense, they are even worse than the *mushriks* of Makkah.

As we imbibe the lessons of Uḥud contained in the *āyāt* of this impeccable Qur'an, we find that these lessons of life are as applicable today as they were at the time of the noble Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). In the variegated experiences of life, war may become necessary to separate the truly committed from the freeloaders. While Muslims are not called upon to initiate hostilities, Allah (ﷻ) gives them complete freedom to defend themselves with whatever means at their disposal if a war of aggression is launched against them. Today Muslims are faced with locust-like invasions of their lands.

Every lethal weapon is used against them. Those Muslims that stand up to defend their land, their families and their honor are branded as “terrorists.” Such perversion of truth is the hallmark of a system and civilization that has declared war on Allah (ﷻ) and His committed vanguard.

The lessons of Uḥud should help us identify not only the enemies of Allah (ﷻ) and the truly committed Muslims, but also the opportunists (*munāfiqs*). The truly committed must behave with a deep sense of attachment to Allah (ﷻ) and His noble Messenger (ﷺ). In the majestic Qur’an, Allah (ﷻ) states this precisely,

**O You who have made a firm commitment [to Allah]! Shall I point out to you a bargain that will save you from grievous suffering [in this world and in the life to come]? You are to securely attach yourselves to Allah and His Apostle, and to strive hard in Allah’s cause with your wealth and your lives: this is for your own good — if you but knew it! (61:10–11).**

It is interesting to note that Allah (ﷻ) asks us to strive in His way first with our wealth and then with our lives. Most of us will never see active combat in our lives; what we are asked to do is part with some of Allah’s (ﷻ) wealth that He has made us a trustee over and spend it in His cause. It is not too much to ask; what is required of us is to acquire the mental aptitude to enable us to do so.

This *tafsīr*, *The Ascendant Qur’an* by Imam Muḥammad al-‘Āṣī, is meant to equip us with precisely that mindset. As we journey through this majestic Qur’an, it should enable us to deal with the vicissitudes of life secure in the knowledge that we are striving for the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ). And what a great bargain that is.

The preparation of each volume for publication has been blessed with the openhanded efforts of a team of individuals who will only be compensated for their dedication by Allah (ﷻ). Special thanks in this regard go out to Br. ‘Imrān Khan and his wife Āsiyah Muḥammad, and Sr. Marjān al-‘Āṣī for proofreading this volume; their contributions have improved its overall quality. Over

the publication of these first five volumes, we have received sincere offers of help and suggestions for improvements by many who have read them. They will notice that we are listening, and as this *tafsir* reaches a larger audience we expect the ongoing feedback to become more nuanced, which will afford us the opportunity to continue upgrading our work with each ensuing volume.

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Al-Muḥarram 2, 1432 (12-8-2010)

## List of Honorifics

Honorifics are the words expressed by every Muslim when the name of Allah (ﷻ), the name of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the names of Allah's previous Prophets (ﷺ) are mentioned, spoken, or written. These are placed in parentheses after the name of each of the above is expressed. They are known to nearly every Muslim; however as this is an English-language *tafsīr* meant for a large English speaking audience that may have little experience with this kind of Islamic etiquette, the list below identifies the ones used throughout this volume, along with their meanings and specific usages.



*subhānahu wa-ta'ālā* (Exalted and August is He): used for Allah alone.



*ṣallā allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam* (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family): used for Muhammad in any and all of his designations, such as *Messenger of Allah*, *the Prophet*, *the Messenger*, *Rasūl-Allah*, etc.



*'alayhi al-salām* (peace be upon him): used for every other prophet; masculine singular.



*'alayhim al-salām* (peace be upon them): used for all other prophets; inclusive plural, masculine and feminine.



*'alayhā al-salām* (peace be upon her): used for Eve, the wife of Adam, and for Mary, the mother of Jesus, among others; feminine singular.



*'alayhimā al-salām* (peace be upon them both): used for any combination of two prophets, for Adam and Eve, or for Mary and Jesus together; inclusive dual, masculine and feminine.

# Transliteration Chart

## Consonants

أ	none (initial)	ض	ḍ
ؤ ئ ء	' (medial or final)	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	ة	ḥ
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

## Vowels and Diphthongs

□	a	ا□	ā	□ى	á
□	u	□آ	ā	□ئى	ay
□	i	□و	ū	□ؤ	aw
		□ى	ī		

The small box in the table above represents an Arabic consonant; for instance, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table would assume the following configuration,

ف□	fa	فَآ	fā	فَئى	fá
ف□	fu	فَآ	fā	فَئى	fay
ف□	fi	فُؤ	fū	فُؤ	faw
		فِئى	fī		

## Tanwīn and Tashdīd

□	an	□ى	ayy	□و	aww
□ى	an	□و	ūw	ف	ff
□	un	□ى	īy (medial)	ش	shsh
□	in	□ى	ī (final)	ر	rr

Similarly, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table above would look like the following,

فَآ	fan	فَئى	fayy	فَؤ	faww
فِئى	fan	فُؤ	fūw	ف	ff
ف□	fun	فِئى	fīy (medial)	ش	shsh
ف□	fin	فِئى	fī (final)	ر	rr



### 3

## Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, Part 2

### The Family of ‘Imrān

The previous section of *āyāt* discussed those who are either intellectually averse to the truth or psychologically irreconcilable with it. The Qur’an is as practical as everything else that Allah (ﷻ) created. The real facts on the ground have established a pattern that persists from the Ḥijāz in the time of Muhammad (ﷺ) to what is being called “the war on terror” today. The next section of *āyāt*, 3:121–179, is directly relevant to this contemporary challenge, discussing as it does the various aspects of the Battle of Uḥud — one of the most important battles of the prophetic period.

### Incognito *Nifāq* and the Lessons of Uḥud

What distinguishes the engagement of Uḥud from other battles is the fact that it was a military clash at the war front and a psychological struggle deep inside human nature. The arena of Uḥud extended from the physical geography of Arabia to the mental topography of the few Muslims who found themselves in a collision of wills with

the *mushriks* and their allies. What stands out in this operation is the fact that the military exchange of blows was only a portion of the larger context in which this war was fought. The behind-the-scenes reality concerned the strife between two irreconcilable attitudes and orientations that faced off in the military skirmish of Uḥud. These mental attitudes and lifestyle orientations had to come to blows sooner or later on the field of battle. There are some individuals in the counter-Islamic camp who want free reign for their political ambitions and economic exploitations, even if such desires amount to a crass violation of all standards of justice and values of peace. In the midst of this psychological tension, which was soon to express itself as a military confrontation, the Qur'an was there to expose the dark secrets of human nature at a time of war. The Qur'an spared no words of advice, counsel, and remedy for the expectations and propensity of this human nature — be it on the side of truth or on the side of false belief.

The manner in which the details of this conflict at Uḥud unfolded was and remains a lesson for the Muslims. At first it seemed that the Muslims had overwhelmed and vanquished the *mushriks*. But then — as if out of the blue — the *mushriks* made a comeback, baffling and bedeviling the Muslims. The larger lesson came out of the transition from what initially seemed like a victory to what was ultimately an indecisive encounter. This bigger lesson was grasped when the struggling Muslims at the war front eventually realized that the scales of war are tipped not by worrying about the spoils of war, but by strict discipline and obedience to the orders they had received from Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ). Humans who have instruments of death in their hands, willingly and enthusiastically using them at the front lines of war, should behave with a deep sense of attachment to Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). This combat at Uḥud was a learning experience for a Muslim army that was a mixed bag: it had its men of steel along with its men of greed. No one would have been able to distinguish them had it not been for their presence together in a life-and-death arena. The unsubdued Muslims emerged from this “battle of mixed results” free of the psychological baggage carried by some Muslims who

showed a lack of discipline under arms as well as a desire for the “profits” of war.

The temperament of those who are doing Allah’s (ﷻ) will on earth has to be free of materialistic considerations and psychological distractions. It took the fierce fight at Uhud to sort out the core-committed Muslims from the shallow Muslims. *Nifāq* is so stubborn that sometimes it cannot be exposed except in the heat of war. Sometimes just setting out on the route to war exposes the *nifāq* virus; but some strains of *nifāq* may not be exposed until the fighting itself commences. Islamic commitment is not for loafers. Along the way there are responsibilities, as well as a struggle that is sometimes accompanied by armed conflict against an enemy. It is the enemies of Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and His *dīn* who travelled a long distance to fight the Muslims. Muslims were not going around trying to ignite wars here and there. The *mushriks* from Makkah came out to wage war against the Muslims of Madinah.

If the Prophet’s (ﷺ) decisions and priorities are reconstructed in our time and generation, then we, too, would have to expect murderous *mushriks* coming from faraway lands to take on dedicated fighters who are resolved to refer affairs to Allah (ﷻ) by means of struggle. What does this mean? It means that once you devote yourself to a “living God” you accept that His determination can take you through many hardships, ultimately including those of the battlefield. This is a fact of which you must be aware from the outset. After that you have to live in constant expectation of the inevitable assault of all earthly forces that are enemies of Allah (ﷻ). From this realization emerges a practical state of preparedness for war, materially and psychologically, in the sense of social and economic institutions that are never far removed from a war-footing, and above all, a frame of mind that is armed with an iron determination to fight with discipline, forbearance, and total commitment. All these facts stir up a keen sense for organization and shared duties. Confidence in these circumstances springs from Allah (ﷻ). Every measure is secured with an ardent feeling of Allah’s (ﷻ) very presence. Once these measures are accounted for, then it does not really matter what the physical results may be:

material victory or material defeat, surviving the war or perishing therein. Nothing that is materialistic or worldly-minded matters any longer when the thrust of human effort is tied to the intimate relationship with Allah (ﷻ) that lives within a motivated Muslim up to and past the outbreak of military hostilities.

The Muslims who broke new ground had to learn this lesson through the bitter experience of Uḥud. They did not learn this lesson on their own; the Qur'an put the whole affair in perspective. The lesson taught to the Muslims on the battleground had implications surpassing any euphoria that might have accompanied an outright victory and it transcended any dysphoria that might have been associated with a clear defeat. The struggling Muslims had little psychological experience of the kind of warfare that engages Allah's (ﷻ) will and ultimately His power. In other words, they were in dire need of the lessons of Uḥud. This, to them, was more valuable than an unconditional triumph against the *mushriks*.

It turned out that Allah's (ﷻ) volition and preference were at work as the combined effort of the hard-pressed showed symptoms of human weakness and covetousness. What may prove more important than the immediate lesson is the long-lasting lesson that should live on with the Muslims until the end of history. Muslims who rethink, relive, and revive the initial experience of Islam should find in this saga at Uḥud plenty of experience for their own struggles and attempts to achieve their goals. The frailty, vulnerability, ambiguity, and selfishness that were displayed by some Muslims in the course of this defining battle turned out, in hindsight, to be the features in which Allah (ﷻ) expressed His overriding decision.

There are physical and social laws that collide in the course of warfare. These laws are the domain of Allah (ﷻ) — and they are the expression of His will. When social laws pertaining to man's relationship with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) are violated, then the consequences will surely follow. The paradoxical issue for those who are products of a materialist world, Muslims included, is that the superpowers seem to be getting away with their rational approach to God's physical laws while the Muslims,

even as they seem to be adhering to God’s social laws, find themselves succumbing to these superpowers. Taking this a step further, some people ask: how could a military force like Zionist Israel humble a “religious” force such as the Muslims? Framing this whole issue in such a light is a demonstration of how people are thinking when they are absent from the immense lesson that comes out of the war at Uḥud.

The Battle of Uḥud was also a war in the psychology of the growing Muslim community. The territorial battlefield was Uḥud but the mental and emotional battlefield was the Muslims’ state of mind. The Muslims had to learn a hard lesson: you deserve victory over the overt enemy when you have conquered the enemies within yourselves. This lesson has to be learned and relearned by all Muslims if they are ever to live up to their military responsibilities.

A thorough absorption of these experiences puts us midway between the lusts and desires for the world that some of us secretly harbor, and the excesses and oppressions of a world that some of us sincerely want to obliterate. This translates into an internal Shayṭān who inflames our passions for the luxuries of materialism and an external Shayṭān who wants to strike us down because of our Islamic political and justice-centered ambitions.

The Qur’an is distinctive and therefore defies conventional thinking. Hence a military lesson like the engagement at Uḥud is immediately followed by an economic one: words in condemnation of *ribā* and financial exploitation. That too is followed by a reference to *shūrā* (participatory decision-making), even though *shūrā* contributed to the apparent military setback at Uḥud.

Anyone who follows the pre- and post-war words in the Qur’an about Uḥud will realize that war is not an isolated military event. War is the total commitment of all resources, potentials, and livelihoods consolidated by human determination before and during the outbreak of hostilities. How can anyone whose mind and heart are imbued with Allah’s (ﷻ) words be surprised that a life-long attachment to Allah (ﷻ) or detachment from Him shall not have its consequences at the war front? Allah (ﷻ) complements us on the battlefield when, preceding the military clash, we live with

Him in all our other endeavors. We should not go to war when we are alienated from Allah (ﷻ); rather we should set out to fight the enemies of Islam with total commitment to Allah (ﷻ) anchored into our consciences and lives. Some of us today display our distance from Allah (ﷻ) by asking during and after all the wars imposed upon us, “But where is Allah (ﷻ)?” Why do we not ask ourselves before that critical moment, “But where are we?” Have we internalized a total commitment to Allah (ﷻ)? Have we been realizing in our lives the principles that come to us from Allah (ﷻ)? Are we behaving in a manner that pleases Allah (ﷻ)?

Allah (ﷻ) is helping us ask ourselves these questions when He opens up the issue of *ribā* and *shūrā* in the context of this discussion of Uḥud. Notice that Allah (ﷻ) did not have us gauge our relationship with Him through some private rituals or personal devotions. The proof that we are honoring Allah (ﷻ) is for us to live up to our social, economic, and political responsibilities. Taking these serious steps will allow the Muslims to prove to themselves that they are fit for the divine assignment. The Muslims must understand that no socio-political order can combine *ribā* and social justice; and no government can combine dictatorship and *shūrā*. Our world today, in Muslim countries and elsewhere, is built upon a combination of all these contradictory elements. And when we Muslims are thrust into wars without being able to sort out our affairs, identify our priorities, and then embark on a military campaign in which we are simple humans doing our utmost for Allah (ﷻ), who will take over the details of military campaigns and warfare?

When we Muslims read *āyāt* 121–179 of *Sūrah* *Āl ‘Imrān*, we should look at the whole picture, and not only at the military piece of it. A war does not take place in a vacuum. There are usually vested interests that ignite wars and consume human lives. Many times these vested interests are lodged in an exploitative financial network of money-generating operations; and these operations are sustained by human beings who thrive on greed, plunder, and disregard for the humanity of their victims. There are military establishments — armies and infantries, navies and air forces, elite units and clandestine ones — who fight and kill so that the super-

structure of *ribā* continues to violate human dignity, human equality, and human rights. When Muslims take on these armed forces they should not be so simplistic as to think that their only enemies are the ones on the battle front; there are other enemies who use these armies to serve their self-centered, corporate ends.

Muslims should have the understanding and insight provided to them in these *āyāt*: that mutual spending and social cooperation are acts of war against the *ribā* lords in parallel with the confrontation and defeat of anti-Islamic militaries. All of this might seem to be wishful thinking or an idealist's dream; but it is not. It comes from Allah (ﷻ) and it was demonstrated in real life by His Prophet (ﷺ); therefore it is our God-given duty to walk ahead with these meanings into the world of human nature, human tendencies, human uncertainties, and human hostilities. In doing so we will express mercy, we will discipline ourselves, we will shed sins and ask for forgiveness when we fall short. These *āyāt* express to us the beaming character of Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ), how he dealt with failing human beings, and how he expressed the tenderness of his heart. *Shūrā* stands out as a necessity for policy-making, even at the most critical and decisive times.

Muslims should never assume they are robotic soldiers haphazardly conscripted into a war. Committed Muslims are warriors who go to war with a deep understanding of the nature of the enemy. A poor conscript at the war front may be a victim of circumstances. The non-Muslim fighters are, in most cases, those who do not know what they are fighting for, and why there is a war against Islamic independence. Often simplistic non-Muslims find themselves forced into a war that does not benefit them as much as it benefits the masters of *ribā*, the capitalists, and their political establishments; and in today's world, even simpleminded Muslims find themselves fighting for these false masters against other Muslims fighting for Islam.

A fighting Muslim is required to look at wars in reference to Allah's (ﷻ) power presence on earth. If there is One God as a matter of belief, then what is to be made of these other human gods who substitute for Him in practice? Is it meaningful to have a God who is located somewhere in man's imagination when there are

many “influential” gods who tell human beings what to think and what to do? If man is supposed to conform and comply with One Deity, then why is it that, practically speaking, he lives instead according to the dictates of “chief executives,” “supreme justices,” and “commanders-in-chief?” These are not fleeting notions of some troops on their way to do battle. These are deep thoughts that should mold the Islamic military character years before it engages implacable enemies in skirmishes and wars.

True, the enemies of Islam hide behind impressive rhetoric and worthy words; they say they are defending freedom, democracy, and civilization, for instance. These are their psychological lines of defense. Setting aside the Islamic ideological critique of the developmental history of these words, who in the Muslim war effort is against freedom, “democracy,” or civilization? The inference of the Western propaganda machine is that Muslims are by nature irreconcilable with liberty, popular governance, and modernity. These vocal propagandists will never place the war between those who affirm Allah (ﷻ) and those who deny Him as the Qur’anic appraisal of forces does. Why? Because if they do, they will have to openly defend corporate covetousness, the industrial-scale exploitations of natural resources in other people’s lands, the conquest of space with secret military missions, and the conversion of the world into one huge capitalistic supermarket for the rich minority, at the expense of the poor.

Whatever the outcome of the military conflict between those who are committed to Allah (ﷻ) and those who reject Him, the *āyāt* declaim that the results are in Allah’s (ﷻ) hands. The Muslims will inevitably encounter ups and downs, points of weakness and others of strength, defeats and victories; none of this should have any negative impact on their bond with Allah (ﷻ). Yes, even military defeat need never take the wind out of their sails. When they know they have engaged Allah (ﷻ) in whatever they are doing — fighting, in this case — then they should rest assured that the resolution at the end of the overall plan is in the care of Allah (ﷻ). And of course this requires discipline and an unshakeable confidence in the power and provision of Allah (ﷻ).



Conversely, a military victory in and of itself has no value if it is not a consequence of other social and justice-centered imperatives. For that matter any type of victory is useless if it is not related to issues of equality, human brotherly cooperation, and justice. But then equality, human cooperation, and justice would just be relative terms if they are not learned and understood from Allah (ﷻ), the source of life and the source of meanings. Are wars to be waged for national interests of the citizens of a particular country? Is blood to be shed for justice for one race or ethnic group only at the expense of another? Should laws regulate a justice that serves the interests of some people or elite, instead of being universal? In a *jāhiliyah*, such rationalizations for waging wars and the devaluation of human life are rife, but they are practically nonexistent in an Islamic society or in an Islamic ordering of the affairs of humanity.

### Overview of the Campaign of Uḥud

- (3:121) And [remember, O Prophet, the day] when you [in an active manner] set out from your home at early morning time to position the committed Muslims in battle formation. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.
- (3:122) As two groups from among you were about to lose heart, although Allah was near to them and it is in Allah that the committed Muslims must place their trust:
- (3:123) For, indeed, Allah did [militarily] support you at Badr, when you were utterly weak. Remain, then, wary of Allah, so that you may have cause to be grateful.
- (3:124) [And remember] when you did say to the committed Muslims, “Is it not enough for you [to know] that your Sustainer will aid you with three thousand angels sent down [from on high]?”
- (3:125) No, but if you are patient in adversity and wary of Allah [and His power], and the enemy should fall upon you all of a sudden, your Sustainer will aid you with five thousand angels swooping down!”

وَإِذْ عَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقْعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦١﴾ إِذْ هَمَّتْ طَّائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيَهُمَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمِدَّكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آءِ الْفِ مِنْ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنَزَّلِينَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصَبَرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُمْ مِنْ فَوْرِهِمْ هَذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آءِ الْفِ مِنْ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِنُظْمِنَ قُلُوبَكُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٦٦﴾ لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ وَاللَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٩﴾

- (3:126) And Allah ordained this [to be said by His Apostle] only as a glad tiding for you, and that your hearts should thereby be set at rest — since no support can come from any save Allah, the Almighty, the Truly Wise —
- (3:127) [And] that [through you] He might destroy some of those who were bent on denying the truth [pertaining to

Allah], and so abase the others that they would withdraw in utter hopelessness.

- (3:128) [And] it is not within your scope [O Prophet] to decide whether He shall accept their repentance or chastise them; for, behold, they are but offenders [against justice],
- (3:129) Whereas to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth: He forgives whom He wills, and He chastises whom He wills; and Allah is Much-Forgiving, a Dispenser of Grace (Āl ‘Imrān:121–129).

These *āyāt*, 3:121–129, constitute a key military lesson. In today’s current affairs, the Muslims are being forcibly militarized; wars and aggressions are coming at them from all directions. So, to begin with, they have to understand this lesson as thoroughly as is humanly possible, and then take the lessons from the experience of the Prophet (ﷺ) at these early times and use them to address the challenges of the present.

In these *āyāt* Allah (ﷻ) addresses the Prophet (ﷺ) directly, calling on him to recall the details of warfare at Uḥud, as he left home early in the day, preparing and positioning his common people for their combat duties. As he was doing this, two important military contingents in the Muslim camp, Banū Salamah and Banū Ḥārithah, were thinking about abandoning this military campaign. They were apprehensive and nervous of a defeat befalling the committed Muslims because ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Sallūl, the treacherous one, had forsaken the campaign along with others like him. This *munāfiq* was saying, “For what are we going to kill ourselves and our children?” and “Had we known there is going to be combat we would follow you!”<sup>189</sup> ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥarām beseeched Ibn Ubayy to remain, exhorting him to honor Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). Consequently, these two military contingents stayed on and fought with the rest of the Muslims under the command of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Committed Muslims, according to these *āyāt*, must place their trust in Allah (ﷻ) in such emotionally turbulent times. Allah (ﷻ) is the One who initiates and delivers victory. It was Allah

(ﷺ) who gave the committed Muslims victory at Badr when they were exposed. At Badr, the Muslims were fewer in number than their enemies, and had much less in the way of equipment. But against all these odds, Allah (ﷻ) intervened in the course of the battle, and the lesser force prevailed over the presumably greater one. Is not this enough proof for all Muslims who enter into a military engagement feeling they are outnumbered by the military might of their enemies? Of course, those who bring Allah (ﷻ) to the battleground with their absolute confidence in Him know He will support them by reinforcing their military efforts with sovereign angels. In the first part of the Battle of Badr, there were 1,000 angels, then as the battle progressed they became 3,000, and finally the number of victorious angels reached 5,000. These extraordinary events are possible when Muslims mobilize all their resources and then rely on their patience and fortitude during the course of a war fought for Allah (ﷻ), who becomes the only power the Muslims recognize. Muslims then need not fear any power on earth; they need to fear only the power of Allah (ﷻ). This is *taqwá*.

When the Muslims understand the engagement with their enemies in these terms, then the *mushriks* may only act on the spur of the moment. Even though they have ostensibly superior military manpower and hardware, they feel time is against them. Such battles are distinguished by the intrusion of the *ghayb*, the manifestation of Allah's (ﷻ) power, and its associated surprising results. The deterrent effect of the unconstrained angels is a guarantee of impending victory; at that time, it also acted to calm the Muslim army, which had previously assumed it would lose the war because it was outnumbered and outgunned. This military lesson teaches the confident, combatant Muslims that victory has nothing to do with superior numbers and weaponry; it comes from Allah (ﷻ).

This lesson also is hard on the God-deniers who in the course of war are killed or captured. They finally realize that frustration and defeat is their due. In all this affair, the outcome is in the hands of Allah (ﷻ). If people are able to detect Allah's (ﷻ) power presence, it is to their advantage; if not, they suffer emotionally and endure distress. And to Allah (ﷻ) belongs whatever is physically

or non-physically on earth and in the heavens — they belong to Him as possessions, as creation, and as inferiors.

The *āyah*, “[And] it is not within your scope [O Prophet] to decide [the outcome of] this affair...” is discussed in the hadith literature. On the day of Uḥud, as the battle raged, the Prophet (ﷺ) suffered a broken tooth and a head injury; blood flowed down his face. At this point he said, “How are such people who are doing this to their prophet going to be successful? Their prophet is only inviting them to their Lord.” It was in the context of this dynamic that Allah (ﷻ) revealed the *āyah* above.<sup>190</sup> Al-Bukhārī reports on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar, that Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) was heard saying, “O Allah! Condemn Abū Sufyān! O Allah! Condemn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām. O Allah! Condemn Suhayl ibn ‘Amr. O Allah! Condemn Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah!”<sup>191</sup> Subsequently this *āyah* was revealed, “It is not within your scope [O Prophet] to decide upon this [military] affair.”

Al-Bukhārī also narrates that when Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) finished reciting during the second *rak‘ah* of *Fajr Ṣalāh*, after saying *sami‘a Allāhu liman ḥamidahu, rabbanā laka al-ḥamd* (Allah has heard he who has praised Him. O our Sustainer! To You is directed our praise), he would say while still standing,

*O Allah! Bring to safety al-Walid ibn al-Walid and Salamah ibn Hishām and ‘Ayyāsh ibn Abī Rabī‘ah and all the powerless committed Muslims. O Allah! Stifle [the power faction of] Muḍar; have them suffer harsh years, as were the dreadful years during the time of [Prophet] Yūsuf. O Allah! Condemn [the power factions of] Liḥyān, Ri‘l, Dhakwān, and ‘Uṣyah; for they have offended Allah and His Prophet.”<sup>192</sup>*

The Prophet (ﷺ) apparently did not continue this invocation after *āyah* 3:128 was revealed, “It is not within your scope [O Prophet] to decide whether He shall accept their repentance or chastise them [as a result of this military encounter]...”

In previous *āyāt*, Allah (ﷻ) advised the consolidated Muslims not to align themselves with bands of evil. This is a real human and social demonstration of how this advice can be applicable and per-

tinent. The two power factions referred to above, Banū Salamah and Banū Hārithah, were prone to doubts because they came under the influence of the *munāfiqs* led by ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Sallūl.

Allah (ﷻ) refers also, during this discussion of the Battle of Uḥud, to the Muslim experience at the earlier Battle of Badr. This battle took place on the 17th day of Ramaḍān in 2AH.<sup>193</sup> On this day, those who had fewer men under arms scored a stunning victory over those who had more. The words of the Qur’an confirm, “... **for, indeed, Allah did support you [militarily] at Badr, when you were inferior.**” In this military encounter, Allah (ﷻ) supported the Muslims with celestial forces who fought alongside them. The Muslims showed they can be patient, combatant, and then deservingly victorious. Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) was himself on the front lines in this war, as he was in at least nine other military campaigns. This defining battle tipped the balance in favor of those who showed a steely determination to fight against all odds. Before the two warring camps engaged in hand-to-hand combat, Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) turned to Allah (ﷻ) and said the following, “O Allah! *If this band of committed Muslims is defeated [at the war front], You will not be revered on earth. O Allah! Fulfill Your pledge to me. O Allah! I ask for Your victory.*”<sup>194</sup> He raised his hands skyward until his cloak fell from his shoulders. Those around him felt the awe of the moment, “**Lo! You were pleading with your Sustainer for aid, whereupon He thus responded to you, ‘I shall, verily, aid you with a thousand angels following one upon another!’**” (8:9).

However, the outcome of the Battle of Uḥud was not so clear cut. To understand the implications and lessons of the Battle of Uḥud, the Muslims cannot afford to do so simply as “religious” Muslims. Before and beyond that, we are activist Muslims whose positive actions are shaped by Allah’s (ﷻ) words, Allah’s Prophets (ﷺ), and Allah’s (ﷻ) inspiration. When we seek to understand these early wars in the formative years of Islam, we do so in order to recapture the character of the Muslims of that time, and emulate their behavior and examples in our time. Nothing less will do.

In the aftermath of the rout the *mushriks* suffered at Badr they went into a typical revenge mode. Abū Sufyān began to stoke the

fires of hostility against the Muslims and resources were committed to defeating them; fighters, young and old, were recruited. A force of 3,000 warriors was prepared for war. Among them were 700 armored nobles, and 200 cavalymen commanded by Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah. As these enemy preparations were being made, information reached Madinah that this hostile force was approaching.

As it became clear to the Muslims that military confrontation with the *mushriks* of Makkah was inevitable, because they were spoiling for a war that they hoped would reverse their earlier defeat at Badr, the Prophet (ﷺ) convened an advisory council (*shūrā*). The central issue debated was whether the Muslims should meet this *mushrik* aggression inside Madinah or outside it. It appears that the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to fight from within the city as this would have given the Muslims advantages of urban warfare in a familiar environment; but the other view favoring confrontation out in the open eventually prevailed. When the Prophet (ﷺ) realized where the majority public opinion finally settled on this issue, he went into his private quarters and put on his armor; this was an indication that he had made up his mind to go to war outside the city.

Prior to the battle, Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) had a dream in which he saw a crack in his sword. He also saw cows being slaughtered. He saw himself place his hand in a protective shield. He interpreted the crack in his sword as having one of his close relatives wounded. The slaughtered cows he interpreted as many of his companions being killed. The shield he said referred to Madinah.<sup>195</sup> This clearly indicated that Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) had a sense of what was to come at Uḥud. But still the *shūrā* had to be honored, and its decisions implemented. This particular precedent was not meant to be peculiar to one incident in one generation at one time in history; it was meant as a lesson for all decision-makers of all generations at all times, of how and what to do when it comes to public affairs, military campaigns, and the participatory role of the Muslim rank and file. Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) placed himself in a position that future generations of less-than-impeccable leaders would find themselves in. If the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Sunnah was peculiar to him alone, he would not have had any need for a *shūrā*; but because his Sunnah is for

everyone, he had to substitute his immediate self for his future Ummah and show them the way. What is lamentable is that today, the Muslims fail to understand this, even as many of them invoke *ṣalawāt* upon his blessed memory.

And so, on the 7th of Shawwāl, 3AH, Muhammad (ﷺ) departed from Madinah with about 1,000 soldiers, of whom 100 had armor and horses. He assigned Ibn Umm Maktūm, the blind man, to lead the *ṣalāh* in Madinah in his absence. When the Muslim army was almost halfway to Uḥud, the traitorous leader of the *munāfiqs*, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, broke away with about one-third of the total fighting force, explaining his action by asserting, “He [Muhammad] contradicts me and listens to some youngsters!”<sup>196</sup> These are the ones who said, **“If we but knew [that it would come to] a fight, we would indeed follow you” (3:167)**. This desertion by a significant force of 300 soldiers also caused two power blocs among the Anṣār, Banū Salamah and Banū Ḥārithah, to have second thoughts about going out to Uḥud. But they finally made up their mind to stay the course with the Prophet (ﷺ). This is what *āyah* 3:122 refers to, **“...as two groups from among you were about to lose heart, although Allah was near to them and it is in Allah that the committed Muslims must place their trust.”** This refusal to accept *shūrā* is precisely what so many Muslims have been guilty of since that time. The breakaway contingent was addressed by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥarām, the father of Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh, who chastised them and encouraged them to reconsider, “Avoid Allah’s corrective power by sticking with your prophet. Fight on a path to Allah for the sake of Allah and fight off aggression.” Ibn Ubayy replied, “I do not think there will be any war breaking out; and if we were sure that war was pending we would be with you.” When the two committed Muslims tired from trying to convince them, they parted with the words, “Go your way, you enemies of Allah. Allah will compensate His prophet with those who are better than you.”<sup>197</sup>

Thus, after these demoralizing defections, a total fighting force of some 700 Muslims, under the leadership of Muhammad (ﷺ), prepared for warfare by occupying positions at the bottom of Mount

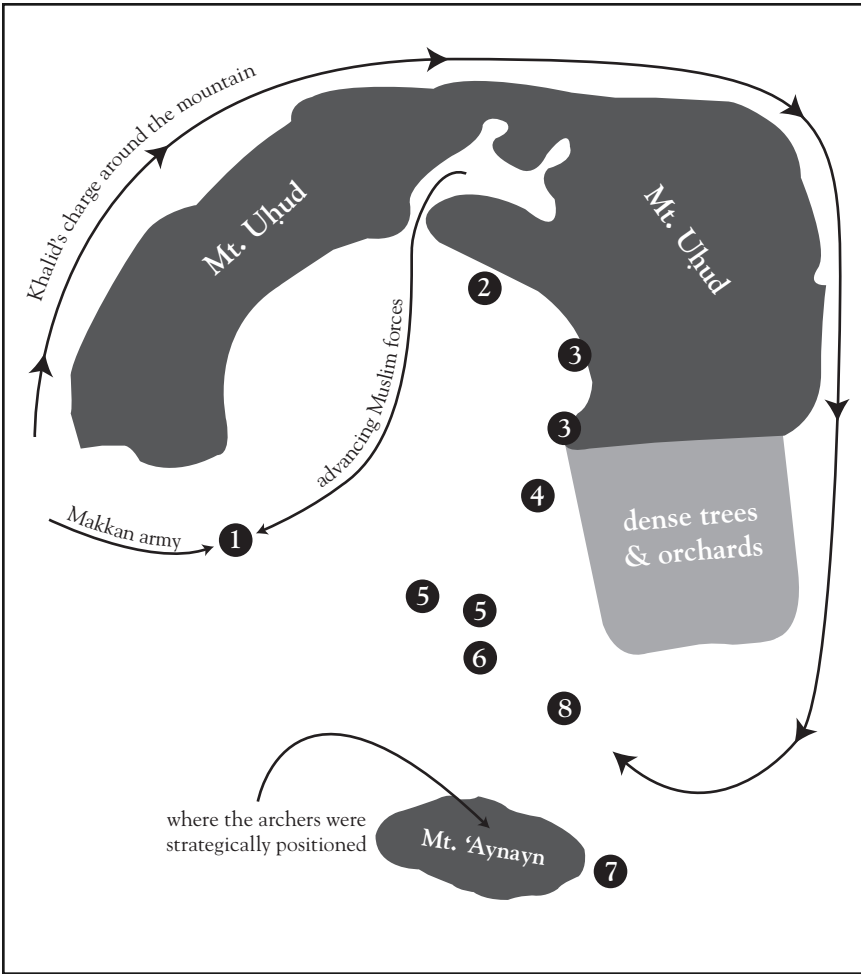


Uḥud, about three kilometers north of Madinah. The Muslims were arranged with Mount Uḥud behind them. Of the 700 Muslim soldiers, 50 were cavalry and 50 were bowmen, the latter commanded by ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr. The 50 archers were strategically positioned at the bottom of the mountain. They were under clear prophetic instructions to stay in their allocated positions, and to not abandon their positions under any circumstances even if vultures were plucking at the Muslims.<sup>198</sup> These archers were the Muslims’ rearguard. They were commanded to shoot at the *mushriks* to deter them from attacking the Muslims from behind.

Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) stood between two armed flanks. The Muslims’ banner was given to Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr. One flank was under the control of al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām and the other was under al-Mundhir ibn ‘Amr. Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) gave his own sword to Abū Dujānaḥ Sammāk ibn Kharshah, who was well-known for his chivalry and heroism.

On the other side, Quraysh were itching for war. Hind bint ‘Utbaḥ, Abū Sufyān’s wife, was the *mushriks*’ cheerleader, playing the tambourines while egging on the troops. They had 3,000 warriors, 200 of whom were on horseback. Their right flank was commanded by Khālid ibn al-Walid and the left by ‘Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl. Their banner was held by Ṭalḥah ibn Abī Ṭalḥah. ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Rabī‘ah commanded their bowmen, who numbered about 100.

The Battle of Uḥud began with a series of one-on-one duels. The first warrior to step up from the *mushriks* was Abū ‘Āmir al-Fāsiq. He was known as Abū ‘Āmir al-Rāhib (the *monk*), but Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) renamed him al-Fāsiq (the *deviant*). This man was the chief of the Aws in pre-Islamic days. When Islam became the order in Madinah, he publicly stated his hostility to Muhammad (ﷺ), left Madinah and joined the Quraysh in Makkah. He became a promoter of war against the Muslims in Madinah, even telling his allies in Makkah that once his people saw him, they would abandon Muhammad (ﷺ) and join the Makkan force. When he stepped to the fore on the battleground at Uḥud, he called upon his tribe and people to abandon the Prophet (ﷺ), appealing to their tribalism. But the Muslims of Aws answered him with con-



**Figure 1:** An approximate illustration of the Uḥud battlefield. The numbered markers on the battlefield represent (1) where the initial engagement took place between the Muslims and *mushriks*, (2) the cave where the Prophet (ﷺ) took refuge when the Muslims were retreating after Khalid's cavalry blindsided the Muslims, (3) the two places where the Prophet (ﷺ) rested during the battle, (4) where the Prophet's (ﷺ) tooth is buried, (5) where the majority of Uḥud's *shahīds* are buried, (6) where Ḥamzah and four *shahīds* are buried, (7) where Ḥamzah was martyred, and (8) the location of al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām's cavalry charge at the beginning of the battle.

tempt, refusing to heed him. Abū 'Āmir went on to fight bitterly against the Muslims.

There were many heroic exploits in this battle. When the two sides engaged en masse, Abū Dujānaḥ fought heroically; everyone who came his way was killed. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ḥamzaḥ ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Ṭalḥaḥ ibn 'Ubaydillāh, Anas ibn al-Naḍr, Sa'd ibn al-Rabī', and others also acquitted themselves admirably. When Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr was killed, the banner was given by Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Ḥamzaḥ, the Prophet's (ﷺ) uncle, fought with chivalry and high spirits, felling many *mushriks* on the battlefield. Near the end of the battle, Ḥamzaḥ sustained a lance wound inflicted upon him by Waḥshī, the slave of Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im. It pierced his lower abdomen and proved fatal, making him the *sayyid* of the Muslim martyrs.

At the beginning of the war all was going well for the Muslims. The *mushriks* felt defeat and began to retreat, until they reached their women behind the lines; the *mushrik* women followed their men in flight. Their banner fell from the hands of Ṭalḥaḥ. It was taken up by his son, and then his brother. The Muslims were on the verge of an all-out victory. When the Muslim bowmen saw the *mushriks* retreating, they left their positions, disobeying a direct order of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). They said, "People! Run for the spoils of war! Run to capture the war booty!" Their commander reminded them of Rasūl-Allah's (ﷺ) orders to stay where they were posted, but they did not listen.<sup>199</sup> Thinking that the *mushriks* were finished, they abandoned their military positions in pursuit of the spoils of war. The mountain was now exposed. As the archers rushed to collect the spoils of war, they left the rearguard compromised and unprotected. Khālīd ibn al-Walīd, an unrivalled military commander in his own right, was patiently waiting for just such an opportunity. He attacked with a mounted contingent and occupied the Muslims' rearguard positions. The *mushriks*, seeing a military breakthrough by Khālīd and the other horsemen, regrouped and launched a fresh offensive against the exposed Muslims.

This is when the battle turned against the Muslims. The Muslims were caught off-guard; they were surprised and demoralized.

Many Muslims panicked, especially as casualties among them mounted suddenly. The *mushriks* moved toward Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) who was now surrounded by only a handful of Muslims. They fought courageously defending Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) until they were martyred one by one. The *mushriks* pelted him with stones until he fell on his side, into a ditch that had been dug and then covered as a trap by Abū 'Āmir al-Fāsiq. Two chain links from the Prophet's (ﷺ) helmet pierced his cheek. As the Prophet (ﷺ) retreated toward Mount Uḥud at his back, his face was cut, and a tooth on the right side of his lower jaw was chipped; blood flowed down his face. He wiped the blood away saying, "How can such people succeed when they bloody the face of their prophet as he calls them to their Lord?"<sup>200</sup> After that, 'Alī held his hand and helped him stand up, as did Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydillāh.

In this confusion, word spread that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed. This rumor at this particular time was a massive psychological blow to the Muslims. Many abandoned hope and virtually withdrew from the battlefield. Hearing what he thought was encouraging news, Abū Sufyān began saying, "O people of Quraysh! Who is the one who killed Muhammad?" 'Umar ibn Qami'ah claimed, "I killed him." When all the Muslims seemed downcast and dispirited, Anas ibn al-Naḍr came to the few Muslims who remained, including 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and a few Muhājirūn and Anṣār, and said, "But why has everyone backed out?" They said, "But Rasūl-Allah was killed!" He replied, "And what is life worth after him? Stand up and die as he died." He went to take on some *mushriks*, and on his way he saw Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh and said to him, "O Sa'd! I can inhale the aroma of paradise short of Uḥud." He fought until he got his *shahādah*; his body had some 70 wounds on it, and was identifiable only by his sister, who recognized his fingers.<sup>201</sup>

Of course Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) was not a casualty of war, and in that critical moment, he called out to the Muslims as the tide was turning against them, "Come to me, subjects of Allah; I am Rasūl-Allah."<sup>202</sup> This was later mentioned in the Qur'an, "[Remember the time] when you fled, paying heed to anyone, while at your rear

the Apostle was calling out to you; wherefore He requited you with woe in return for [the Apostle’s] woe” (3:153).

After these confusing minutes, the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) came walking toward the Muslims, “[And Allah will protect you from men [who deny Allah]]” (5:67). The first to recognize him was Ka‘b ibn Mālik who called out, “O Muslims! Good news! This is Allah’s Messenger.” Muhammad (ﷺ) gestured to him to be silent. The Muslims regrouped around him, and they moved to a higher place on Mount Uḥud.

Abū Sufyān took to a mountain peak and called out, “Is Muhammad among you?” Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) said, “Do not answer him.” Abū Sufyān then asked, “Is Ibn Abī Quḥāfah [Abū Bakr] among you?” And there was no answer. He then asked, “Is ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb among you?” And no one answered. Then Abū Sufyān said to his people, “These have been taken care of,” meaning that they have been killed. ‘Umar could not control himself and responded, “O enemy of Allah! Those that you mentioned are still alive. Allah has kept for you that which will rile you!” Abū Sufyān replied, “Some corpses have been mutilated; I did not order that to happen but I am not disturbed by it!” This was a reference to what his wife Hind had done to the body of Ḥamzaḥ, cutting his belly and chewing his liver, after he had been killed by Waḥshī.<sup>203</sup>

Abū Sufyān then said, “Hubal is supreme,” referring to an idol at the Ka‘bah. Then Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) said, “Will anyone answer him?” And they said, “But what should we say?” The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed, “Allah’s Majesty is exalted and climactic.” Abū Sufyān then said, “We have al-‘Uzzá [another idol], and you have none.” The Prophet (ﷺ) told the Muslims to respond by saying, “Allah is our Authority Supreme, and you have none.” Abū Sufyān said, “This day compensates for [our losses at] Badr. You win one, you lose one.” ‘Umar answered, “Not the same — our deceased are in Paradise, yours are in the Fire.”<sup>204</sup> When Abū Sufyān left the battlefield, he said, “Next year we will see you [the Muslims] at Badr.” The Prophet (ﷺ) told the Muslims around him to respond to Abū Sufyān, saying, “And we will have another match between us and you.”<sup>205</sup>

By all accounts, the day of Uḥud was one of reproach and bitter experience. The Muslims sustained 70 martyrs. The *mushriks* were reported to have suffered the death of 22 soldiers. Among the Muslim martyrs was Ḥamzaḥ, the highest-ranking *shahīd*. After the battle, Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) went about looking for his uncle Ḥamzaḥ. He found him lying on the battlefield with a gouged abdomen and his nose and ears cut off. Upon seeing Ḥamzaḥ's lifeless and mutilated body Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) was deeply grieved. He wrapped his uncle up with his own cloak, prayed for him and said seven *takbirs*. The other Muslim casualties were aligned together. It is said that the Prophet (ﷺ) offered 72 prayers over them. Then Ḥamzaḥ was buried and the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the rest of the Muslims to be buried where they had been martyred; and thus they were laid to rest right on the battleground of Uḥud.

It turned out that the reason for this partial and temporary setback was the disobedience of the archers who left their defensive positions to grab some of the spoils of war. The result was that the indecisive battle ended in a setback for all the Muslim fighters. But it also taught them a precious lesson: victory needs to be earned by worldly efforts; sole reliance on divine support is not sufficient on its own. Had the Muslims been totally defeated, their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) would have been eroded and their relationship with Allah (ﷻ) would have been battered. But that did not happen even though they militarily “lost the battle.” In light of this, Allah’s (ﷻ) words are painful but true, “...so that you should not grieve [merely] over what had escaped you, nor over what had befallen you, for Allah is aware of all that you do” (3:153). A divine lesson is meant for all, although a few may have triggered it, “**And beware of the sedition which does not only befall those among you who are averse to Allah...**” (8:25).

At the conclusion of hostilities, the *mushriks* hurriedly left the battlefield. The Muslims thought they may have been on their way to Madinah to sack the city and take hostages. The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to follow them, and see what they were up to. ‘Alī reported that he had followed them and found them on their camels on their way to Makkah.

As they were returning to Madinah, the Muslims began to reconsider the outcome of the battle. Some of them began to blame themselves for not doing enough to defeat the *mushriks*. Others regretted not being able to decapitate the *mushrik* leadership. Some of them decided to go back and fight. This was brought to the attention of the Prophet (ﷺ), who called the people of Madinah to a meeting. He encouraged them to trail the *mushrik* army and catch up with them. He said, “Only those who fought in the battle should come along.” ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy said, “I will ride with you.” Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) refused. Other Muslims also responded to this call to arms, even though many of them were badly injured. They said to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), “We listen and we obey.” Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh asked Muhammad (ﷺ) for permission to go and fight, and be relieved of a family duty he promised his father after returning from Uḥud.<sup>206</sup>

The Muslims put on their military gear and proceeded with the Prophet (ﷺ) to a place called Ḥamrā’ al-Asad. The mobilized Muslim armed forces waited three days for the *mushriks* to come back and attack Madinah, but they did not; so the Muslims left their forward positions, and returned to Madinah.

**And bear in mind [O Prophet the day] when you [in a military manner] set out from your home early in the day to position the committed Muslims in battle formation. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing (3:121).**

Muslims should mark their calendars when Allah (ﷻ) is telling them to remember this day and time. Yet one can choose almost any *hijrī* calendar in the world, and probably will not find the 7th day of Shawwāl listed as the first day of the Battle of Uḥud. Just as the Saudi government wants to obliterate the milestones of that heroic history, and these commandments in the divine Writ, their agencies around the world are busy obliterating this history from Muslim memory. If the Qur’an is saying to the Prophet (ﷺ) and everyone aligned with him to recall and remember this day, why is it that this day is so hazy and fuzzy in the memories of almost all Muslims today?

### The Role of the *Malā'ikaḥ*

An important element of these *āyāt* that discuss the Battle of Uḥud has to do with the *malā'ikaḥ* — the word usually translated as *angels*. In these *āyāt*, Allah (ﷻ) reveals how these “angels” are involved in battles. For the sake of simplicity, the word *angels* can be used to translate the Qur’anic word *malā'ikaḥ*, although the meaning is not quite what people usually understand by the term *angels*.<sup>207</sup> A Muslim’s understanding of *malā'ikaḥ* is based on the information given in this pristine Qur’an. The God-given truth to mankind is communicated to human societies via Allah’s Prophets and Apostles (ﷺ) who are central elements of their societies. The Qur’an also relates that this truth, Allah’s (ﷻ) words, is communicated to these select Prophets and Apostles (ﷺ) by the agency of *malā'ikaḥ*. They are thus central to the human experience of divine inspiration and revelation. Some of this meaning can be extracted from the following divine Qur’anic words,

**He causes the angels to descend with this divine inspiration, [bestowed] at His behest upon whomever He wills of His servants. Warn [all human beings] that there is no deity except Me; be, therefore, consciously defensive of Me! (16:2).**

These angels are thus the facilitators of Allah’s (ﷻ) will in the life of humanity. There are many aspects of life that are viewed mechanically by the secular mind. A scriptural mind knows better. There is nothing mechanical about the development of human life, for example. Within observational power of anyone, learned or ignorant, is the realization that at one point in the development of a fetus, it gains a *rūḥ* (a conscious awareness, usually translated as *soul*). Making this happen is part of the task of the angels. Angels are also tasked with observing and monitoring what human beings do. They also have the responsibility of preserving the physical and natural conditions that make life possible on earth and anywhere else where human life may be possible. And of their more important duties, insofar as man is concerned, is that they deliver our



inevitable worldly deaths to us. All this is known only because the Qur’an and the Prophet (ﷺ) have divulged these facts. There is no other source of information on the angels because man has no sensory or empirical access to them; but this is of no consequence, as man can confidently rely upon what Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) have made known.

The Qur’an and the Sunnah contain a good deal of information about angels. A hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) indicates that “... angels are created from light; jinn are created from the flames of fire, and Adam was created as described to you.”<sup>208</sup> As for their physical form, the Qur’an says they have wings,

**All praise is due to Allah, Originator of the heavens and the earth, who causes the angels to be [His] message-bearers, endowed with wings, two, or three, or four. [Unceasingly] He adds to His creation whatever He wills, for verily, Allah has the power to will anything (35:1).**

The same *āyah* indicates one of their primary roles, as message-bearers from Allah (ﷻ) to His Apostles and Messengers (ﷺ).

Angels may be all around man’s domain and yet he is unable to see them. Thus the angel Gabriel (ﷺ) would come to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) conveying scriptural revelation, and the people sitting around the Prophet (ﷺ) were unable to see him. A *muttafaq* hadith relates an incident of the Prophet (ﷺ) when he said,

*“O ‘Ā’ishah! Gabriel is here and he relays salutations of peace.”  
And she replied, “and peace and blessings to him, too. He sees what I cannot see.”<sup>209</sup>*

Angels are capable of appearing in various forms. Substantiating this is a hadith on the authority of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who was present at an occasion when the angel Gabriel (ﷺ) came to the company of Muhammad (ﷺ) in the form of an unknown man,

*While we were sitting in the company of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) a man wearing extremely white clothes came up to us. His hair was pitch black. He had no indications of a traveler. None of us knew who he was. This man asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about islām, imān, and ihsān, as well as the Day at the end of time; the Prophet (ﷺ) answered him in detail. After this strange man had left, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked, “Do you know who this inquirer was?” They said, “But Allah and His Prophet are more informed.” He [the Prophet (ﷺ)] said, “It was Gabriel; he came to teach you your dīn.”<sup>210</sup>*

The Qur’an also narrates an occasion when Gabriel (ﷺ) came to Maryam (ﷺ) in human form, after she had distanced herself from her people,

**And call to mind, through this divine Writ, Mary. Lo! She withdrew from her family to an eastern place and kept herself in seclusion from them, whereupon We sent to her Our angel of revelation, who appeared to her in the shape of a well-made human being. She exclaimed, “Verily, I seek refuge from you with the Most Gracious! [Approach me not] if you are defensively conscious of Him!” [The angel] answered, “I am but a messenger of your Sustainer, [who says], ‘I shall bestow upon you the gift of a son endowed with purity’” (19:16–19).**

The adaptation of angels to human forms is mentioned several times in the Qur’an. For example, there is the story of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) entertaining some honored guests,

**And has the story of Abraham’s honored guests ever come within your domain [of appreciation]? When those [angels] came to him and bade him peace, he answered, “[And upon you be] peace!” [saying to himself], “They are strangers.” Then he turned quietly to**

his household, and brought forth a fat [roasted] calf, and placed it before them, saying, “Will you not eat?” [And when he saw that the guests would not eat], he became apprehensive of them; [but] they said, “Fear not,” and gave him the glad tiding of [the birth of] a son who would be endowed with deep knowledge. (51:24–28).

Even though they appeared to be human, Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) became apprehensive when they refused to eat. Also mentioned are the angels who came to Prophet Lūṭ (ﷺ) to destroy his society. These angels came to him in the form of attractive and handsome young men. They were so beautiful and charming that the homosexual society around Lūṭ (ﷺ), also known as Prophet Lot in the Gospel, were tempted to seduce them,

And when Our messengers [angels] came to Lūṭ, he was sorely grieved on their account, seeing that it was beyond his power to shield them [from his society’s sexual perversion]; and he exclaimed, “This is a woe-ful day!” And his people came running to him, impelled toward his house [by their lust], for they had ever been wont to commit [such] abominations. Said [Lūṭ], “O my people! [Take instead] these daughters of mine: they are purer for you! Be, then, defensively conscious of Allah, and disgrace me not by [assaulting] my guests. Is there not among you even one right-minded man?” (11:77–78).

Then there are the two angels in human form who entered into David’s (ﷺ) prayer niche, pretending to be adversarial opponents,

And yet, has the story of the litigants come within your knowledge: [the story of the two] who surmounted the walls of the sanctuary [in which David prayed]? As they came upon David, and he shrank back in fear from them, they said, “Fear not! [We are but] two litigants.

**One of us has wronged the other; so judge between us with justice, and deviate not from what is right, and show [both of] us the way to rectitude (38:21–22).**

Angels may also appear in the form of a known person. It is reported that Gabriel (ﷺ) came to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) in the likeness of Diḥyah al-Kalbī, a well-known companion who was exceedingly handsome.

Angels are in continuous acknowledgment of Allah’s (ﷻ) glory, majesty, and splendor; their nature is to exalt and extol Him,

**And Lo! Your Sustainer said to the angels, “Behold, I am about to establish upon earth one who shall be [My] successor. They said, “Will You place on it such as will spread corruption thereon and shed blood, whereas it is we who extol Your limitless glory, and praise You, and hallow Your name?” [Allah] answered, “Verily, I know that which you do not know” (2:30).**

The Qur’an suggests that angels do not procreate or reproduce. They are humble subjects and direct subordinates of Allah (ﷻ). This means they were created directly by Allah (ﷻ) Himself and for Him. The words of Allah (ﷻ) in the Qur’an criticize people for feminizing the angels or giving them a gender,

**And [yet] they claim that the angels — who in themselves are but beings created by the Most Gracious — are females; [but] did they witness their creation? This false claim of theirs will be recorded, and they will be called to account (43:19).**

One of the angels’ roles is communication. They deliver words and wisdom from Allah (ﷻ) to His Apostles and Prophets (ﷺ); they are able to transcend cosmic distances and intervals with no lapse of time, “All the angels and the *rūḥ* ascend to Him [daily] in a day the length whereof is [like] fifty thousand years...” (70:4).

Angels fear Allah (ﷻ) even though they do not disobey Him and are constantly proclaiming His glory,

**...and the thunder extols His limitless glory and praises Him, and [so do] the angels, in awe of Him... (13:13).**

**For, before Allah prostrates itself all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth — every beast that moves, and the angels: [even] these do not bear themselves with false pride; they fear their Sustainer high above them, and do whatever they are bidden to do (16:49–50).**

There are certain angels who are mentioned individually in the Qur’an, “Whosoever is an enemy of Allah and His angels and His message-bearers, including Gabriel and Michael, [should know that], verily, Allah is the enemy of all who deny Him” (2:98). Gabriel (ﷺ) is known to be the angel of revelation and scripture and was involved in the unfolding of prophetic history,

**[Say, O Prophet], “Would that you two turn to Allah in repentance, for the hearts of both of you have swerved [from what is right]! And if you uphold each other against him [who is Allah’s message-bearer, know that] Allah Himself is his Protector, and [that], therefore, Gabriel, and all the righteous among the committed Muslims, and all the [other] angels will come to his aid” (66:4).**

Two of the other angels mentioned in the Qur’an and Sunnah are Mikāl (ﷺ), also known as Michael, who is instrumental in delivering provisions to humans: sustenance, livelihood, and plentifulness; and Isrāfīl (ﷺ), the angel of death, who is sometimes called ‘Azrā’il (ﷺ). Isrāfīl (ﷺ) is said to be the one who will blow the horn of the first grand cessation of life on earth. He will also blow into the horn for life on Resurrection Day,

And [on that Day], the trumpet [of judgment] will be sounded, and all [creatures] that are in the heavens and all that are on earth will fall down senseless, unless they be such as Allah wills [to exempt]. And then it will sound again. And lo! Standing [before the Seat of Judgment], they will begin to see [the truth]! (39:68).

Angels are also known to surround the Throne; they are to be found in paradise; and they are also to be found surrounding the Fire,

And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne of [Allah's] Almightyness, extolling their Sustainer's glory and praise. And judgment will have been passed in justice on all [who had lived and died], and the word will be spoken, "All praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer of the worlds!" (39:75).

...gardens of perpetual bliss, which they shall enter together with the righteous from among their parents, their spouses, and their offspring; and the angels will come to them from every gate [and will say], "Peace be upon you, because you have persevered!" (13:23–24).

And what could make you conceive what hellfire is? It does not allow to live, and neither leaves [to die], making [all truth] visible to mortal man. Over it are nineteen [powers]. For We have caused none but angelic powers to lord over the Fire... (74:27–31).

Finally, the termination of earthly human life is an angelic act, "Say, '[One day], the angel of death who has been given charge of you will terminate your life, and then to your Sustainer you will be brought back'" (32:11).

This background information about the *malā'ikah* is necessary to highlight the significance of the involvement of angels in the

two major battles between the early Muslims and their Makkan enemies, the Battle of Uḥud and before that, the Battle of Badr. And Allah (ﷻ) indicates beyond any doubt that angels were active participants in these battles, alongside the Muslims. These angels are invisible participants on the side of Allah (ﷻ), the truth, and the sincere and sacrificing Muslims. They are made of light and they cannot be contained by the visual or auditory sensory range of ordinary men on the field of battle. They are able to reconfigure themselves into human form and perform unusual and extraordinary feats. They do not disobey Allah (ﷻ) in whatever they do; therefore, for them to be active players in a war, the Muslims would have to be in utter obedience to Allah (ﷻ).

Human nature, even allowing for the commitment of Muslims, tends to be apprehensive when it goes into battle against the numerically superior enemy. The fact of being with Allah (ﷻ) can be subsumed by this human fear. A reminder of whose side the combatant Muslims are on is merited here,

**[And remember] when you did say to the committed Muslims, “Is it not enough for you [to know] that your Sustainer will aid you with three thousand angels sent down [from on high]?” (3:124).**

Combat-ready Muslims are reinforced with these angels on the battlefield. However, when God-offending “Muslims” fight, they cannot expect the angels’ help as they are in violation of Allah’s (ﷻ) will and command.

Those years of struggle saw 1,000 angels reinforcing the committed Muslims at Badr. Some sources say the number was 3,000 while others say there were 5,000. This may be a matter of semantics that can never be settled; but the precise number is not important. What is clear, however, is that if their presence at the battlefield is merited, it becomes a dynamic of the discrepancy in numbers between the fighting Muslims and their military opponents. The battle of Uḥud and the way it developed would indicate that the angels were not militarily engaged with the Muslims; how

could they be engaged when the Muslims disobeyed Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ)? And how was it possible for the angels to be militarily engaged when the Muslims ended up virtually losing this battle? And remember, all of this happened while the Prophet (ﷺ) was in their midst!

### Who Were the Deserters with ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy?

The leadership of Muhammad (ﷺ) was severely tested in the course of this war. First, one third of the Muslim army broke away, and then the archers ignored the orders given to them by Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ). These two developments resulted in a serious setback for the Ummah at Uḥud. What should be amazing to all Muslims is that their historians do not have in their possession the names of those 300 or so individuals who chose to go with ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy and not with Muhammad (ﷺ). Obviously they lived on to become part of future Muslim armies, during the Prophet’s (ﷺ) time and after his death. Should it not be known who they were? And yet there is no historical record of their names and identities. The reasons for this are not clear. This may have been part of the information that was expunged from Muslim history books by the monarchical governments that assumed power over the Ummah after the period of *al-khilāfah al-rāshidah*.<sup>211</sup>

What is clear, however, is that no one in his right mind would attribute the military reversals at Uḥud to imperfect individual prayers, ignorance about the fast of Ramaḍān, or issues of personal hygiene. Contemporary Muslims have to break out of the ritualistic shell in which much of the Ummah has been encased for centuries, and begin to see the facts with their God-given hearts and minds. The reversals at Uḥud were directly and exclusively related to a lax commitment to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) leadership. The Prophet (ﷺ) and those in his immediate “inner circle” evidently chose not to discipline the 300 deserters. This may have been because such a mass proceeding could have precipitated internal strife in the nascent Islamic political community in Madinah — something the struggling Muslims could not afford in the difficult circumstances asso-



ciated with the aftermath of Uḥud. The hard lesson of Uḥud was well understood by the core Muslims around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), but it was insufficiently absorbed by those Muslims who chose to leave the Prophet (ﷺ) on the road to war, as well as the archers who were more anxious to collect the spoils of war than to remain in their assigned positions.

### Victory Only Comes from Allah (ﷻ)

Now it is time to penetrate these meanings of the Qur’an a little deeper as they illuminate events and highlight the triangular engagement among the inspiring leadership of the Prophet (ﷺ), the committed Muslims, and the objectors — the *mushriks* of Makkah and their fifth column in Madinah, the *munāfiqs*,

**And [remember, O Prophet, the time] when you [in a military manner] left home early in the day to arrange the committed Muslims in battle formation. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. It was then that two factions from among you were about to lose heart [Banū Salamah from the Aws and Banū Ḥārithah from the Khazraj], although Allah was their [immediate] higher authority; and it is in Allah that the committed Muslims must place their trust (3:121–122).**

It was easy for the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims of those days to recall the nature of war preparations that this *āyah* is referring to, but it seems quite difficult for Muslims today to remember the military character of Muhammad (ﷺ). Why do the Muslims exclude the military character of Muhammad (ﷺ) from their field of view? Why do they get defensive about this military personality of Muhammad (ﷺ) that was meant to uphold, extend, and spread the truth against its violent and bloodthirsty enemies? The picture is vivid and clear: the Prophet (ﷺ) took the lead in organizing the Muslims as a fighting force. The fact that should never evade anyone who reads and understands this truthful Book is that whatever

the adherents of Allah's (ﷻ) cause do, they should be conscious of the fact that Allah (ﷻ) is with them. When Muslims assemble for military duty, they should do so with a heightened sense of Allah's (ﷻ) presence. Allah (ﷻ) dwells in the Muslims' minds and in their actions, war duties included. It is the intensity of this thoughtful feeling that gives the Muslims their confidence and momentum. A Muslim conscience is saturated with Allah's (ﷻ) immediacy. Unlike other people who are uneasy with "God" or do not want to be reminded of Him — even in relaxed and undemanding contexts — Muslims are eager adherents and companions of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messengers (ﷺ). He is with them all the way to the last moments of their lives.

**"Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing."** After consulting with the Muslims and deciding to go from Madinah to Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) went to his home and prepared for war. In this particular case, Allah (ﷻ) was present while the Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims were consciously observant of His presence. It is easy to say "God exists everywhere;" but it is not common practice to mentally and emotionally observe the presence of Allah (ﷻ) when critical decisions are being debated and society is being put on a war footing. In the process of decision-making by *shūrā*, the aura of Allah (ﷻ) is palpable: everyone who is there should be aware that Allah (ﷻ) hears and knows everything — whatever is said and thought, outwardly and inwardly.

The Qur'anic words of wisdom highlight two contingents of people who were losing interest in their military Islamic responsibilities. These two groups lost their nerve when they saw 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy forsaking the Prophet (ﷺ) and defecting with over 300 fighters. He rationalized his treacherous act with the ludicrous statement, "Had we proof positive information that you were to do some real fighting we would follow you." This public pronouncement had a corrosive effect on the morale of other Muslims who were vacillating between fighting and staying at home. If all these factors are taken into consideration — more than 300 deserters, two Muslim communities numbering at least a hundred or two, and then the archers who eventually disobeyed the Prophet (ﷺ) by

abandoning their positions — we immediately realize that the core of committed Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ) was not as big as we might like to imagine. Thus, going to war was not an easy choice for these “limited” Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ). When all this is brought into our field of view, it should become apparent why the words of Allah (ﷻ) record these facts in scripture; they are not left unsaid, and they were not left for future historians to narrate with their own biases. The wavering of these two blocs of Muslims was put into scriptural record for Muslims to contemplate until the end of time, whenever similar challenges arise. Anytime that a group of Muslims entertains doubt or begins to equivocate when it comes to their Islamic duty, they should understand that Allah (ﷻ) is their higher authority and that they should rely upon Him alone.

This episode brings to light how human beings and human nature respond when they are subjected to the calculations of a material and physical world, in this case, when one-third of the army abandoned the war effort. If war materiel, war technology, and war resources determine victory then the world would not have witnessed David (ﷺ) killing Goliath; the world would not have seen Mūsá (ﷺ) and the Children of Israel trapping the commander-in-chief of that era’s superpower and his armed forces in God’s will as He drowned them in the Red Sea; and the world would not have learned the lessons of Vietnam and Afghanistan. And, as Muslims, we would not be able to understand, “...for, indeed, Allah did [militarily] aid you at Badr, when you were so weak.”

Military technology and other resources including manpower were on the side of a God-denying Makkah but when the apparently weaker Muslims maintained faith in Allah (ﷻ), it was Allah’s (ﷻ) victory that carried the day. This is what is meant by *taqwá*, “**Remain, then, defensive of Allah.**” *Taqwá* fits very comfortably in a military atmosphere when there is a worldly bully opposing the power of Allah (ﷻ).

Compare this with the example of policy-makers in Muslim areas today. In the first instance, there is no popular *shūrá*; secondly, there is no Islamic leadership; and thirdly, the imposed dictators and their henchmen have no confidence in Allah (ﷻ). Remind

them of the words of the Qur'an — **“Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing, and in Allah shall the committed Muslims trust”** — and they smirk as if you are a neanderthal. Today the United States is in the midst of a major war for control of the natural resources of the Islamic East, and a psychological war to convince Muslims that it is their ally against dictatorships, rogue states, and tyrannical regimes.

And how do the governments in various Arabian countries behave? Is there the slightest sign that they pay any attention to these *āyāt*? Is there any honor that runs through their conscience? Absolutely not. Saudi Arabian governmental functionaries have been trying to outperform 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, the all-time *munāfiq*. They send mixed signals about whether they might allow military bases in Arabia to be used by the pro-Zionist US government. “Saudi Arabia will do what’s in its best interests and in the best interests of its friends and allies, including the United States,” said Prince Khalid ibn Sultan, the Assistant Defense Minister in Saudi Arabia. “Let’s not forget what it did in 1991... We shared our blood together. We protected each other in the field and we saved American lives as America saved other countries, including Saudi Arabia.” At the outset of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Saudi decision-makers permitted the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) to operate from the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf and granted overflight rights for attack planes flying from bases in and around the Arabian Peninsula. The forces of US aggression based AWACS planes in the land of Uḥūd, along with tankers to refuel attack planes in Saudi airspace before they headed for their targets.<sup>212</sup> There were tens of thousands of *mushrik* troops in and around Arabia. General Saeed al-Haznawi, the Saudi commander at Prince Sultan military base, showed no embarrassment about the Saudi partnership with the United States. “It’s one team really,” he said. “We have no problem with the way we work together.”<sup>213</sup>

Little wonder then that the two-facedness of the Saudis has become legendary. They pretend to be “devout” and “pious” Muslims while in reality they owe their allegiance and faithfulness to the Zionist idol: the United States government.<sup>214</sup> Allah (ﷻ)

being All-Hearing and All-Knowing is just so much gibberish to the Saudi royals.

In the battle of Uḥud, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy’s personal interest defeated any Islamic impulse he may have felt. There were others who found common cause with this dual-loyalist, following him when he disengaged himself from the war effort under Rasūl-Allah’s (ﷺ) leadership. The archers also relinquished their positions in violation of their leader’s orders. And all the heroism and chivalry of the rest of the Muslim troops around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) could not achieve victory under the weight of these circumstances. Before He goes on to disclose the facts of how Uḥud became a disaster, Allah (ﷻ) reminds the Muslims of how Badr was a godsend,

**For, indeed, Allah did support you [militarily] at Badr, when you were insignificant. Remain, then, defensive [of Allah] so that you may have cause to be thankful. [And remember] when you did say to the committed Muslims, “Is it not enough for you [to know] that your Sustainer will aid you with three thousand angels sent down [from on high]? No, but if you persevere in adverse circumstances and avoid [Allah’s power of retribution], and the enemy should take you by surprise, your Sustainer will reinforce you with five thousand angels taking aim.**

And Allah ordained this [to be said by His Apostle] only as good news for you, and that your hearts should thereby be comforted — since no support can come from any save Allah, the Almighty, the Truly Wise. [And] that [through you] He might destroy some of those who are deniers [of Allah], and to abase the others by [causing them to] withdraw in utter hopelessness.

[And] it is not within your scope [O Prophet] to decide whether He shall accept their repentance or chastise them, for behold, they are but violators [of justice], whereas to Allah belongs all that is in the

heavens and all that is on earth. He forgives whom He wills, and He castigates whom He wills; and Allah is Much-Forgiving, a Dispenser of Grace (3:123–129).

The Muslims at Badr scored a miraculous military victory. There were no material or physical factors that would have tipped the balance at Badr in favor of the militarily weaker Muslim fighters. There were over 1,000 *mushriks* who were mobilized to secure Abū Sufyān and his caravan. They were well armed and superbly equipped. They also had a strong motivation to fight because they were on a military mission to protect the trade route and to preserve their “sovereignty.” In their propaganda, the Muslims were the equivalent of bandits who were out to rob and loot them.

On the other side the Muslim numbers were only around 300. They were not mobilized in a military sense. They were out to claim some recompense for the properties that had been confiscated or lost when they had to flee Makkah with their lives. In addition to their numerical weakness, their military equipment was negligible and substandard. Moreover, there were also *mushriks* in and around Madinah who posed a serious threat to this emerging Islamic power center, and dual-loyalists (*munāfiqs*) in Madinah who were acting like fifth columnists. As if that were not enough, there was also the deadly presence in Madinah of the Yahūd — the time-tested enemies of Allah (ﷻ), His Prophets (ﷺ), and the covenant-centered Muslims. Hence the Muslims on their way to Badr were a tiny band of the faithful in a land teeming with all sorts of enemies and antagonists.

The stark discrepancy between the forces was highlighted by the stigma that many of these early Muslims felt as “refugees, run-aways, and renegades” from Makkah, a position that the Anṣār of Madinah did little to offset in the larger milieu of Arabian society. Thus for the Muslims of Uḥud and for all combat ready Muslims who psychologically give in to the odds, this is the context of Allah’s (ﷻ) reminder of the amazing and wonderful victory of Badr, “...for, indeed, Allah did give you victory at Badr, though you were inconsequential.”

Before Muslims get too full of themselves, they should remember that in all circumstances, and especially in the context of war, it is Allah (ﷻ) who comes to their help and extends victory to them. Muslims should listen and learn from His eternal words: victory for Muslims is not contingent on material resources, political connections, or alliances with *tāghūtī* military powers. The only power that merits awareness and attention in every circumstance is that of Allah (ﷻ) — not nuclear powers, not superpowers, and not weapons of mass destruction. All of these are fancy words that can only interfere with the Muslims’ protective power relationship with Allah (ﷻ), otherwise known as *taqwá*. The Muslim imprint on history is this: we prove that Allah (ﷻ) wins and His enemies lose. We are the catalyst in this formula. And for this we should feel and express gratitude.

When Muslim thoughts and impressions reach this level of mutual understanding with Allah (ﷻ), then they have the capacity to internalize what He says,

**[And remember, O Muhammad] when you did say to the securely committed Muslims, “Is it not enough for you [to know] that your Sustainer will provide you with three thousand [fighting] angels sent down from above?” (3:124).**

These were not desperate people who needed some type of assurance that they will stand a chance to win this unbalanced war. These Muslims initially set out to regain a portion of what was rightfully theirs when they were forcibly expelled from Makkah. They had planned to take on a commercial caravan, but found themselves fighting a military expedition. In this context, Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) passed on to them what Allah (ﷻ) had communicated to him. Of course their attachment to Allah (ﷻ) brought about an air of confidence and a sense of self-assurance. At some level, these human beings were no different than any other human beings with all the temptations and vulnerabilities in human nature, so of course it was reassuring for them to hear these words of authority and confidence

coming from Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). But this involvement of Allah (ﷻ) had its terms and conditions: they had to be uncomplaining and steadfast, they had to be focused on Allah (ﷻ) and ever-vigilant of His power presence. They knew that their enemies would try to overwhelm them, and that they would have to stand firm without protest or disapproval. They would have to place the *taqwá* of Allah (ﷻ) above every experience in anticipation of confrontation with a massively superior enemy,

**But if you are fortified with patience in adverse conditions and defensive toward Allah [and His power], and the enemy should attack you by surprise, your Sustainer will help you with five thousand descending angels (3:125).**

What this meant was that they would have to do however much they could within the limited means available to them, and then Allah (ﷻ) would do what He wills within the unlimited means available to Him, and that the combined effort would carry the day. This inclusion of Allah (ﷻ) in man's endeavor is the highest expression of "communion" with Allah (ﷻ). No prayer or supplication can substitute for these moments of human humility and Godly glory combined, albeit sometimes with blood and tears.

**And Allah enacted this only as worthy news for you, and that your hearts should therefore be calm, since no victory can come from any except Allah, the Almighty, the Truly Wise (3:126).**

If today's Muslims were anchored in these Qur'anic reassurances, they would not give unqualified priority to balance-of-power arguments. Such rationales, in direct contravention to these *āyāt*, want Muslims to believe that peace and security can only be maintained through a system of power alignments, which establishes an equilibrium of power between rival blocs. States participating in a balance-of-power system enter into alliances with friendly states to



protect their positions. This argument goes on to say that if a balance-of-power arrangement works well, peace may be sustained for a period of years. So long as a near-equilibrium is thought to exist, neither side will dare launch an attack upon the other. However, with the military build-up characteristic of a balance-of-power system, there is always the danger that war will result from border incidents, miscalculations, escalations, or other causes unrelated to planned attack. In *jāhili* history, balance-of-power systems have kept the peace for short and long periods, but have often deteriorated into war sooner or later. For 40 years in the second half of the last century, a worldwide balance-of-power system existed between the communist and capitalist blocs, resulting in the greatest and most costly armaments race in history. Before that, balance-of-power agreements between the European colonial powers broke down resulting in WWI and WWII.

Instead of Muslims following the meanings of these powerful words of Allah (ﷻ), there are pseudo-Muslims who have alienated their minds from the Qur’an and thus do not believe in any military confrontation unless there is a balance-of-power advantage to ensure favorable results. Had this ever been the reasoning behind military engagements during the formative years of Islam in Arabia at the time of Muhammad (ﷺ) and thereafter, there probably would never have been any military clash between the enemies of Allah (ﷻ) and the allies of Allah (ﷻ). It simply would not have happened. Today, these same types of individuals are terrified of engaging their minds with this Book and committing to its liberating message: that no victory can come from any except Allah (ﷻ).

Unlike the secular military officers and heads of state in Muslim countries today, the early Muslims placed their unqualified confidence in Allah (ﷻ), went to the war front, and fought with scriptural instructions — confident that the outcomes were in Allah’s (ﷻ) hands. Of course those Muslims believed and acted on the common-sense knowledge that they would need to use all the equipment at their disposal; that they would have to mobilize as many able-bodied soldiers as possible; that they would have to have a military budget; that they would need as much information about

the enemy as they could get; and that they would not neglect any opportunity, which does not violate Allah's (ﷻ) standards, to deplete the fighting and staying power of their enemies — of course they understood and did all that. But when all that fell short of a military parity with the enemy, they did not make excuses to avoid combat on the basis that military victory seemed too difficult. What they did was mobilize all their natural and human resources and then go to war knowing that after they did all they could the whole military outcome will be determined by Allah (ﷻ), come what may.

In this particular discourse there is a brief description of the Battle of Badr. The Prophet (ﷺ) was telling the Muslims that Allah (ﷻ) had promised them angelic reinforcements if they did not panic and were not overcome by sudden mass fear or anxiety, **“Allah is Almighty, Truly Wise.”** These are the two most important factors: power and wisdom. Whose is the ultimate power and wisdom in the progress of war? A Muslim has no doubt; it is Allah's (ﷻ). Then Allah (ﷻ) enlightens the Muslims about what the wisdom of a military victory is,

**So that He might destroy some of those who deny Allah [His power status], and to abase the others so that they would withdraw in absolute despair. It is not within your scope [O Prophet] to decide whether He shall accept their repentance or berate them, for indeed, they are but transgressors of justice (3:128).**

The enemies of Islam are vanquished by a number of interconnected factors. They are defeated by the number of casualties they sustain, by losing territory to victorious Muslims, by their diminishing authority over other people, by losing the money and wealth that went into financing their aggression, and finally by the psychological impact of defeat by a force that is apparently weak but nonetheless fortified with a power they cannot understand or imagine. Once this is an established result of war, they will be forced to withdraw in total desperation. In some instances, an Islamic victory may help some of the enemies of Islam, particularly

those ambivalent about the anti-Islamic cause, to see the light and atone for their previous enmity to Islam. Some may even become committed fighters for Allah (ﷻ).

But there will always be the die-hard enemies of the Muslims who will be tortured by the Muslims’ victory, for “...**certainly, they are violators of justice.**” Some of these types will die fighting against Allah (ﷻ), some of them will become prisoners of their own psychological hatred of Allah (ﷻ), and others may become prisoners of war. Some of them may die in a state of denying Allah (ﷻ) His power presence in man’s earthly affairs. Most of them are doomed to suffering and agony. They tried to deceive themselves as well as the committed Muslims, and they lost on both counts. They cannot mislead the Muslims because the Muslims have a military character; and they cannot mislead themselves because their actions will catch up with them and they will eventually encounter justice, however much they may seek to avoid it.

As has been said in *āyah* 2:254 of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, people who are theoretically opposed to Allah (ﷻ) become legally and militantly opposed to Allah (ﷻ), “*wa al-kāfirūna humu al-ẓālimūn: and the deniers of Allah are the evildoers*”. *Ẓulm* (injustice and oppression) is *kufr* (the ideological denial of Allah (ﷻ) by certain people) in transition. If denying God was a strictly theoretical, psychological, or theological matter, there would never have been war between Muslims and non-Muslims. Those who believed in Allah (ﷻ) would restrict themselves to verbal assertions of their faith, and those who objected to Him would limit their objections to words and hypotheses; but the bitter fact of life and history is that this objection to Allah (ﷻ) takes on a political configuration, an economic system, a financial body of interests, a military build-up, and then an urge for war against those who are devoted and committed to Allah (ﷻ). This is because the Muslims cannot confine their faith to words alone, and their actions are bound to threaten the systems and interests of the non-Muslims.

Muslims are taught not to be intoxicated by a military victory. Rather than gloating over it, they should accept it with modesty and decency. Victory, and all other outcomes, are not in the

human scope of achievements. They only come due to Allah's (ﷻ) might and wisdom. Muslims should be as humble at the war front as they ought to be in all other tasks done for Allah (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ), **"It is not within your scope;"** that is, you are not the one to determine the outcome; you are not responsible for the consequences. If this is said to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), it is all the more applicable to ordinary people who are much less than prophets. In the course of the coming *āyāt*, some individuals are going to ask whether they were responsible for unsatisfactory consequences. Others will say that if they had anything to do with the matter, the outcome might have been better. To preempt all this, Allah (ﷻ) says that the whole affair is in His hands: man can never predict what the consequences are going to be, much less be responsible for such situations as arise when the military encounter ends.

Badr demonstrated these facts and the Muslims' recourse should be to these enlightening lessons. A physical military clash may end with military victory or defeat. What is more important is the human morale and confidence that lives on humbly after a military victory and emphatically survives after a military setback. When Muslims begin to feel overwhelmed at the battlefield, Allah (ﷻ) takes them out into the larger world where

**...to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; He forgives whom He wills, and He penalizes [with suffering] whom He wills. And Allah is Much-Forgiving, a Dispenser of Grace (3:129).**

In other words, release yourself into Allah's (ﷻ) domain; do not be distracted by the threat of pressures associated with military conflict. You belong to Allah (ﷻ), and Allah (ﷻ) is larger and greater than your immediate surroundings, even if there is war all around you. Justice is inevitable because it is in the hands of Allah (ﷻ). All developments ensuing from this cause are embedded with wisdom and justice. Alas for us who live in the unsettled world of today, we do not have the range of life and time to witness the

physical justice of our here and now. But if we are attached to Allah (ﷻ), we transcend the here and now even while we are involved in it, **“And Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Merciful.”**

The main points of *āyāt* 3:121–129 can be summarized in the following list,

1. Humans with an informed understanding of their relationship with Allah (ﷻ) are required to exhaust all means available to them. They cannot expect favorable results, or any result at all, without working toward achieving them. This applies in both war and peace time. One of the requirements for desirable God-produced results is for the people to obey the leader who obeys Allah (ﷻ). The Muslims were triumphant at Badr, after Allah (ﷻ) empowered them with angels who took part in the battle, because the Muslims were conscious of Allah’s (ﷻ) power and acted accordingly. This is *taqwá*, a concept that is best understood when there are other powers besides Allah’s (ﷻ) challenging the Muslims.
2. Military victory should always be considered the function of Allah (ﷻ) and not the purpose of man. It is due to those who meet its conditions; and it materializes on “Allah’s (ﷻ) watch” and not on man’s.
3. Military commanders are expected to have a war strategy. There is also a necessity to know how to fight. This is understood from Allah’s (ﷻ) words, **“And [remember when] you left your family early in the morning to arrange the committed Muslims in battle formation...”**
4. There may be groups who, when the time to fight arrives, become hesitant and confused. Talking about war is one thing; going out to wage war and possibly meeting death is another. People should be given the freedom to express the way they feel about going to war. This freedom was guaranteed to that vanguard generation of Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ). There were two segments of the Muslim population, Banū Ḥārithaḥ and Banū Salamaḥ, who showed signs of reluctance to join the Muslim march to the front. But they reconsidered and decided to march out with the rest of the Muslims; and

- even the 300 dual-loyalists who broke away from the Prophet (ﷺ) could not then persuade them to abandon the jihad.
5. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself was breaking new military ground as he personally participated in the war. In total, he physically fought in nine wars, including Uḥud where he was wounded on his face, his lower right front tooth was shattered, and his helmet was crushed on his head. The example is clear: no Muslim, however important, prominent, or famous, can be considered exempt from the obligation of military jihad in the appropriate circumstances.
  6. One of the tragedies of Uḥud was the death of Ḥamzaḥ, the Prophet's (ﷺ) uncle. He was killed by a slave, Waḥshī, who wanted to be free.
  7. Placing military confidence and strategic reliance in Allah (ﷻ) is central to any war if Muslims are to do Allah's (ﷻ) will on earth, **“And it is in Allah that the committed Muslims must place their trust.”**
  8. One of the dynamic developments of a war in which Muslims meet their scriptural standards is the participation of fighting angels, who are vehicles of Allah's (ﷻ) help — *naṣr*. The war at Badr, which met all scriptural standards, was one in which the poorly armed and poorly prepared Muslims were reinforced by angels. The Muslims became agents of Allah's (ﷻ) will and thus the results unfolded according to His determination. **“His command, if He wills a thing, is to say to it, ‘Be,’ and it becomes” (36:82).**
  9. Allah (ﷻ) said to His Prophet (ﷺ), **“It is not within your scope [O Prophet] to decide whether He shall accept their repentance or chastise them.”** It was the inclination of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) to ask Allah (ﷻ) to eradicate such stubborn and savage enemies. But Allah (ﷻ) wants to teach us that as long as we do His will, the outcome is His to dictate, not ours.

It is mentioned in some sources that, in the buildup to and aftermath of Uḥud, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) said *du'ā' qunūṭ* in his *Fajr*

*Ṣalāh*.<sup>215</sup> In this *qunūt* there was a military aspect that included the names of persons who were responsible for initiating or sustaining war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). It seems clear that any time the Muslims have to endure the effects of war eroding their morale or gnawing at their civil stability, they should intensify the *qunūt* in their *ṣalāhs*. Some people have removed the *qunūt* from *ṣalāh* altogether, and others have incorporated it into all their *ṣalāhs*. Neither tradition seems to be in accord with the practice of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), which is much more variable than most Muslims realize. The specific individuals whom Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) condemned in his *qunūt* were al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, Suhayl ibn 'Amr and Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah.<sup>216</sup>

Before these *āyāt* proceed into Uḥud's military details, it is advisable to keep the larger frame of this military clash in mind. The larger battlefield is the psycho-socio-economic context of the war. And central to the "need for war" are the concept of *ribā*, usurious financial transactions, and the corporate structure within which these activities take place. One cannot be a Muslim who combines the *taqwā* of Allah (ﷻ) with the glitter of any usurious capitalist system. The Muslim economic psychology is one that gives to and shares with those who are in need; the usurious economic psychology is one that takes from and exploits those who are in need. When Islam goes beyond feelings and theory, it becomes a cooperative social exchange among all the members of an Islamic society or nexus, poor and rich alike. There has to be a consolidated social order that is capable of producing fighters who know that when they go to war they are building an Islamic relationship with Allah (ﷻ) at the same time as they are demolishing a human affinity with Satan. This is the point of the next section.

## Ribā Leads to Perpetual War

- (3:130) O you who are [securely] committed to Allah! Do not gorge yourselves on *ribā*, doubling and re-doubling it; but remain on your guard concerning Allah, so that you might be successful;
- (3:131) And avoid the Fire that awaits those who are deniers [of Allah and His power]!
- (3:132) And obey Allah and His Apostle, so that you might be graced with mercy.
- (3:133) And vie with one another to attain to your Sustainer's forgiveness and to a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, which has been readied for those who [actively] are on guard concerning Allah [and His retributive power];
- (3:134) Who spend [in His way] in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and hold in check their anger, and pardon their fellow men because Allah loves the doers of good;
- (3:135) And who, when they have committed a shameful act or have [otherwise] offended themselves, remember Allah and pray that their sins be forgiven — for who but Allah can forgive sins — and do not knowingly persist in doing whatever [wrong] they may have done.
- (3:136) These it is who shall have as their reward forgiveness from their Sustainer, and gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide: and how excellent a reward for those who labor! (Āl 'Imrān:130–136).

These *āyāt* provide context for Allah's (ﷻ) analysis of the military particulars of Uḥūd, and they bring the Muslims to a germane component of their Islamic pledge. A military battle for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) is fought for a reason. It is not disconnected from the surrounding social and financial conditions that influence every aspect of the war. We as people must understand that the initial decisions we have the freedom to make place us on various collision courses with each other. There are people who conform to the



يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَاَ أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً ۖ وَاتَّقُوا  
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾  
وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى  
مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ  
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ  
الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾  
وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا  
لِدُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرِ الدُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا  
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ  
تَجْرَىٰ مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

national corporate interest; God to them is putting on fancy clothes once a week and going to a temple for meaningless and ritualistic services. God does not mold their behavior, He does not influence their strategies, and He does not inspire their relations with others. These types are on a collision course with Muslims who conform to Allah (ﷻ), want to obey Him, and desire to understand His Word so that it can be applied to their world. These two spheres — one conforming to an elitist capitalist program and the other conforming to a cooperative Islamic one — are bound to

clash. And when that happens, Muslims should not for one moment think that a military encounter occurs in a vacuum.

The Muslims should have a healthy understanding of the realities of life in this world; and they should gain this robust understanding from the faultless Qur'an. This part of *Sūrah Āl 'Imrān* represents a long lesson of a military nature; and within this lesson the collective Muslim mind ought to be focused on a prewar contributory factor: *ribā*.

**O you who are securely committed to Allah! Do not take [literally eat] *ribā*, doubling and re-doubling it; but remain on your guard concerning Allah, so that you might be productive. And avoid the Fire that awaits those who are deniers [of Allah and His power]! (3:130–131).**

Some scholars quote this *āyah* and use it to claim that the Qur'an and Allah (ﷻ) ban only compound interest and not simple interest. This is another way in which secular scholars in Islamic lineaments try to “legalize” a *ḥarām*. This *āyah* is not parsing the word *ribā*. It is simply stating the way *ribā* behaves. Once the *ribā* system takes hold it begins to generate extravagant and unrestrained amounts of profit, mostly for the few who run the system. Look at what the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other such institutions are doing with the way they lend money to countries around the world.<sup>217</sup> This *āyah* plainly states that Muslims are prohibited from usurious transactions because these transactions take on a life of their own, and the accumulated money is not subject to the asset and liability fluctuations of the market.

The *āyah* in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* is explicit and definite about *ribā* of any type, “**Give up all vestiges of *ribā*” (2:278)**. This is a blanket statement that banishes all traces of *ribā*. It is a comprehensive command to cast out *ribā* and associated attitudes from all financial transactions and activities. *Ribā* is not merely “interest.” It is a monetary system that thrives on increasing the gap between the rich and the poor. This type of fiscal structure is bound to wreak havoc

among relations between those who lend money to make a killing and those who are forced to borrow money to survive. *Ribā* results in a class of financiers who will stop at nothing to secure their outrageous profits at the expense of the suffering of the vast majority of people.

Of course in Arabia at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), there were no complex corporate structures like the ones in today’s world, dominated as it is by capitalism and institutional classism. The Arabians used to purchase items and postpone paying the full price. During the postponement, the price of that item would increase; this increase was referred to as *ribā*. This type of transaction was very common among individuals, as well as between tribes, such as between Thaḳīf and Banū al-Naḍīr.

This *āyah* is situated strategically after Allah (ﷻ) warns the committed Muslims not to ally themselves with power camps outside the Islamic bloc. He tells Muslims that if they persevere and bear in their minds and consciences Allah’s (ﷻ) power — that is, if they develop *taqwā* — then no worldly power will be able to harm them. Examples of perseverance and *taqwā* were seen in the battles of Badr and Uḥud. This mental construct of the committed Muslims made them keenly aware of the *mushriks* and Yahūd. From here on the Muslims could identify with clarity the *ribā-laced* practices of both peoples.

### The *Ribā* Mentality Is the Antithesis of Social Cohesion

“O you who comply with Allah! Do not be involved in financial transactions that involve *ribā*” as occurs in ignocracies (*jāhiliyāhs*). This statement, forbidding Muslims from *ribā* money, could not be more clear. In the ignocracy of that time in the Arabia of 1,400 years ago, people used to say: when the time comes to pay your balance you can either pay it off or you can postpone payment and pay an extra amount (*ribā*). Sometimes the longer the period for repayment the more *ribā* was accumulated. This could go on for years. And so the *ribā* itself was multiplied many times over several occasions. Banning *ribā* in these *āyāt* is linked to the *taqwā* of Allah

(ﷻ). *Ribā* is a global phenomenon and the *taqwā* of Allah (ﷻ) is a universal phenomenon. Muslims have to understand these issues not only personally but also in this aggregate sense. They need to remind themselves that this *āyah* was the third installment in the series of *āyāt* that were revealed to phase out *ribā* from Muslim societies. Any type of *ribā* is *ḥarām*, whether it is 1% or 1,000%. *Āyāt* 278–279 in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* were the last consignment of *āyāt* that banned and prohibited all *ribā* activity. Any type of capital that generates a profit not linked with the variable business profit in an immediate transaction is *ribā*.

The *ribā* of *jāhiliyah*, or *ribā al-nasī'ah* (delayed usury), is what is referred to today as *compound interest*. This interest is *ḥarām* and the words of the Qur'an are precise, explicit, and distinct about it. The *āyāt* in this section refer to this type of *ribā* specifically; but that does not mean that this is the only *ribā* that is forbidden. *Ribā* itself is the economic cause of greed and money-mania.

*Ribā* is a cardinal social sin. It cannot be tolerated under any circumstance, or in any form, except in unusual or compelling conditions when there is no longer an Islamic system that regulates the economy and governs the circulation of wealth. One possible analogy would be with the equivalent of eating pork: no Muslim in his right mind would try to justify it, but if a Muslim is starving and no other food is available, he is allowed to eat it to survive. In extraordinary circumstances, when individuals find themselves living outside of an Islamic economic order, and in which conditions they may be reduced to sub-survival levels if they do not take part in *ribā* transactions, then their involvement in the exploitative system is unavoidable. But if there are people who think they can extend this analogy to say that *ribā* should be tolerable when they want to borrow on *ribā* terms to expand their commerce, build up their industry, or increase their agricultural production, then they are wrong — unless, in an un-Islamic economic order, they are faced with bankruptcy or the imminent collapse of their livelihood. When there are no *ḥalāl* lending procedures around, then *ribā* is tolerated only to the extent that it gets the person out of immediate danger and insolvency.

There are some contemporary attempts to jump-start an Islamic circulation of money outside of an Islamic state or order. The circumventing devices are *murābahah*, *muḍārabah*, and *mushārahah*. *Murābahah* involves selling a commodity with a contract that it will be bought back later at a premium that is equivalent to the interest that would otherwise be charged. *Muḍārabah*, meaning *sleeping partnership*, involves a silent partner who provides cash for an activity undertaken by an active partner, any profits being shared according to a preexisting agreement; in case there are losses, the investor loses his capital and the active partner loses his labor and time. *Mushārahah* entails an investor being treated as an active partner who shares in the profits or losses, according to a partnership agreement. Over the past few decades many banks that use one or more of these methods have emerged in Muslims countries, especially where the Shari‘ah is supposed to be the “law of the land.”

These “patchwork” solutions do not work because they are not part of the determined, consistent implementation of the whole of the Qur’an and Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). An Islamic financial system has to evolve from a popular Islamic movement that replaces all the vestiges of the old *jāhili* order with new and fresh Islamic financial instruments. Muslims cannot accept outlaw governments such as the ones in Arabia that nominally control thousands of billions of dollars — real control belongs to the banks in America and Europe — while throwing the crumbs of a few million dollars to “Islamic” banks. Such banks with the obligatory, rubber-stamp Shari‘ah boards have been set up to assuage the guilt of “over-sensitive” Muslims so that they can dodge their personal brush with *ribā* transactions, while turning a blind eye to the local and worldwide institution of *ribā* capitalist and corporate interests that continue to thrive and prosper.

Then the *āyāt* lower their focus from a merciful economic and financial system to merciful individuals: people who spend money and wealth in times that are plentiful and in times that are tight, when they are making large sums of money and when they are only making enough to get by. This description was mentioned previous-

ly in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, “**Those who spend their money and wealth night and day, privately and publicly...**” (2:274). This means that nothing can distract them from giving, gifting, spending, and disbursing what has come to them from Allah (ﷻ). In this atmosphere of social responsibility, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*Avoid the Fire, even by [giving] a fragmented date.*”<sup>218</sup> These individuals are described as those who are able to restrain themselves from anger and its associated consequences. They stop blaming and forgive people who have done them wrong, especially when they have the power to take “revenge” or “corrective action.” This is social self-discipline. The Muslims no longer know how such a society works in practice because they no longer have such virtues working across the entire spectrum of those who have great wealth to those who have none. We occasionally find such qualities in individuals, but we do not have the consolidation of these qualities in a social order with its distinctive government that puts these *āyāt* into institutional practice and policy.

Such persons whose qualities are enumerated in these *āyāt* form the individual building blocks of an Islamic social reality. They are people who are willing to forgive those who have done them wrong and forgo their revenge even though they are capable of extracting it. This character belongs to Allah’s (ﷻ) conforming subjects — people whose minds are broad, whose thoughts are deep, whose discipline is profound, and whose dispositions are strong. A person who forgives others is a notch above he who contains his anger. Synonymous to this meaning is, “**...and who, whenever they are moved to anger, readily forgive...**” (42:37).

In a world conditioned by an acrimonious media that is quick to throw all types of accusations against Muslims, who are routinely presented by the propagandists as spiteful, unforgiving, and vindictive, we Muslims should not be so easily duped. We read this Qur’an to assimilate and reproduce its meanings in our own behavior and in our dealings with others. We hear what Allah (ﷻ) tells us in this *āyah*, and we listen to what His Prophet (ﷺ) advises us in this hadith,

*Whoever wants to be delighted by his constructive efforts and to gain a higher degree [of virtue] should forgive the one who mistreats him, and give to the one who denies him, and build bridges with the one who abandons him.<sup>219</sup>*

In some quarters of the medical profession it has been observed that feelings of resentment and hostility increase the risk of heart disease. In some studies it has been shown that forgiveness can moderate the ill effects on the heart. People who blame others for their troubles have a higher incidence of chronic pain, cardiovascular disease, and other ailments. Why is forgiveness good for us from a medical standpoint, if for no other reason? Forgiveness reduces chronic stress. Self-generated stress triggers negative physical changes, including increased blood pressure and heart rates, and decreased immune system function, all of which contribute to ill health and disease. Forgiveness increases one's sense of control. Feeling in control is crucial to health. It moderates the stress response because one is less likely to panic and overreact to situations. Feeling helpless can make one ill. When man learns how to forgive, he develops the emotional confidence to rise above difficulties.

Being forgiving does not require you to be an emotional doormat. You do not have to condone unkindness, forget that something painful happened, or deny and minimize your emotional hurt. Nor does forgiveness mean that you must reconcile with an offender. Forgiveness is for you, not for the offender. It prevents you from wasting mental and emotional energy by being trapped in a self-consuming anger. In a sense, forgiveness is the feeling of peace that you experience when you understand and accept that life does not always give you what you want; that you do not have to take a hurt so personally; and that bad things need not ruin your present, even if they have spoiled a part of your past.

These moral and honorable standards, all readers of the Qur'an should realize, are presented in a lesson that speaks about war. Yes, Muslims are required to be moral even at times of war, when just about everyone else loses their sense of morality. Forgiving someone else is not an easy task, especially when you know you

are right. And what makes it harder is to forgive in an atmosphere of conflict or war. This sequence of meanings — from the details of Uḥud to the high moral ground of combatant Muslims who are willing to forgive — is probably in reference to the Prophet (ﷺ) forgiving the archers who did not honor his command when he told them not to leave their positions under any circumstances; but they did and many Muslims died because of this aberrational act of insubordination. However Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) forgave them because, despite their unreserved commitment to him, they were still human beings who buckled under the enticements of an undisciplined human nature. It is also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ), as he looked at his uncle Ḥamzaḥ’s mutilated body after the disengagement of forces, said “By He who has my life in His hands! I will mangle seventy of them [the mushriks]!”<sup>220</sup> Here Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) expressed the immediate human reaction to the savagery of war. But, on consideration, the Prophet (ﷺ) moved from his gut-reaction to the high standards of Allah (ﷻ) and the Qur’an. And Allah (ﷻ) adores those who strive to do what is best, those who are not willing to provoke irrational counter-revenge by their rightful revenge.

Āyah 3:135 can be paraphrased as: and those who do any immoral act — such as adultery, fornication, larceny, etc. — or have otherwise offended themselves — with behaviors such as drug addiction, substance abuse, consumption of prohibited foods, or any other offenses that are self-inflicted — whenever they fall into these mistakes, they immediately remember Allah (ﷻ). This remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) is important because it causes them to turn to Allah (ﷻ) and ask for His forgiveness. This happens in the life of a committed Muslim; it could have an opposite effect on others who are not actively conscious of Allah (ﷻ) in their lives. Muslims should contemplate and analyze the meanings of this āyah. Implicit in this āyah is the fact that humans are prone to fall into sin. The difference between a committed Muslim who falls into sin and others is that the committed Muslim immediately remembers Allah (ﷻ), and immediately asks for His pardon. In this sense, everything a committed Muslim does brings him closer to Allah (ﷻ), who is



the only One capable of granting forgiveness. Allah (ﷻ) excuses and forgives all types of human misbehavior and improper and immoral conduct, as long as there is no deliberate *shirk* (breach of allegiance with Him), **“Verily, Allah does not forgive *shirk*, although He forgives any lesser infraction unto whomever He wills” (4:48)**. Corroborating this general forbearance of Allah (ﷻ) toward fragile humans is another *āyah*, **“My *rahmah* [grace] encompasses everything” (7:156)**.

There is, however, a condition for Allah’s (ﷻ) forgiveness: whoever is asking Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness should not persist on doing wrong. If one wants Allah (ﷻ) to forgive him for something wrong he might have done, he will not do it again. A Muslim, to his utmost ability, should suppress and defuse the inclination to sin, **“...[they] do not knowingly persist in doing whatever [wrong] they may have done” (3:135)**.

Never should a Muslim entertain the idea that Allah (ﷻ) is not willing to show mercy and grace. He should realize that what initially was a sin can become a motivation for him to “pull himself together” and move on to a higher level of morality and ethical conduct. These meanings are not isolated from context in this enduring Scripture. Allah (ﷻ) says,

**Do they not know that it is Allah alone who can accept the repentance of His subjects? (9:104).**

**Yet he who does wrong or [otherwise] hurts himself, and thereafter pleads with Allah for forgiveness, shall find Allah Much-Forgiving, a Provider of Grace... (4:110).**

### Usurious Profits are Secured by Wars of Occupation

The gap in the contemporary Muslim mind, generally speaking, is that it tends to fragment the integrated lessons of the Qur’an. In this lesson, a direct relationship between going to war and the institutionalization of *ribā* is described. Society has to be visualized as a whole. There is a mutually supportive relationship between *ribā* —

or capitalism — and global instability leading to war. Governments are willing to go to war to defend or expand their usurious gains. The (national) interest of concentration of wealth needs a concentration of physical and material strength. When dedicated Muslims are called upon to go to war, according to these *āyāt* about the Battle of Uḥud, they should understand they are not only confronting military power; they are also confronting every element of the power of those they are fighting, including the economic powers behind the military forces. Approaching these *āyāt* with the larger context in mind, a thinking Muslim can begin to see how the financial establishment is linked to the military establishment. An oppressed people can be financially, economically, and institutionally occupied, just as they can be aggressed upon militarily. Thus, confronting *ribā* and eliminating it from society are inseparable from confronting the military power of the usurious capitalists.

After understanding how compulsive militaries and oppressive usurious institutions go together, how can any Muslim “rationalize” or justify *ribā*? If a Muslim is sure of Allah’s (ﷻ) power, and if he is certain of Allah’s (ﷻ) wealth, then what excuse does he have to join the side that is inimical to Allah (ﷻ)? People who carry Muslim names should not be allowed to get away with being considered genuine Muslims while they are the suppliers of wealth to the usurious system that has enslaved the peoples of the world. People should be evaluated by their conduct and its relative consequences, not by the camouflage they cast over their behavior. In today’s world there are many *ribā* magnates who get away with appearing as “Muslims” while they invest in the institutions of the *kāfir*s and tie their own interests to the power of the *mushriks*.

If nothing else, this extended lesson shows it is impossible to combine a commitment to Allah (ﷻ) with a usurious financial structure. By its nature *ribā* and its vast network of exploitation and manipulation ultimately stands for a concentration of wealth; while a commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and a financial socialization of this commitment stands for a more equitable distribution of wealth.

These *āyāt* that tie the financial to the military have their contemporary relevance. The destructive dynamics of *ribā* and Uḥud are

not things of the past; they are still at work today, and will continue to be a part of human relations until a *ribā-free* world emerges. These *āyāt* lend themselves to a more precise focus on the Anglo-American war on Iraq. The *ribā* side of the equation is beginning to show its ugly face, even though attention remains focused on the military element. Iraq has immense oil and gas reserves — officially, 112 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, while some oil companies estimate reserves to be around 230 billion barrels.<sup>221</sup> And the capitalist elites have far greater economic interests in Iraq than just oil; Iraq also has more than 250 trillion ft<sup>3</sup> of proven natural gas reserves. For the usurious powers, this is far more than enough motivation for seizing the country in the name of humanitarian reconstruction and long-term development, even without less direct interests, such as securing a power base in the oil-rich region.

The pertinent question here is: can the Muslims apply this Qur'anic commentary to the world they live in today? Will Muslims be able to oppose the forces that are moving into Iraq to exploit its natural resources and then recycle the bits and crumbs to the Iraqi people, while hiding behind a complex facade of pro-democracy and reconstruction rhetoric?

For the last few generations, the people of Iraq have been living the torture and miseries of a brutal and ruthless dictatorship — one that was supported, financed, and coached by the US itself during the 1980s. Their social cohesion had hit rock bottom. After occupying Iraq and setting up a puppet government, the US and its subordinates will aim to show the Iraqi people an improvement in many areas of their lives. But this improvement — in terms of religious freedoms for previously persecuted communities, political freedom for those who accept the constraints of the pro-American system, injections of investment into the economy, infrastructure development, and more emphasis on Iraqi individuality — will be intended to obscure the real issue here — militant *ribā* interests vis-à-vis Islamic cooperative economy — and thus delay the day of reckoning. To put it slightly differently: are today's Muslims able to bring the facts of Uḥūd into today's world? Can they see the Iraq war in terms of America's historical opposition to Islamic self-deter-

mination? Are the Muslims capable of seeing how American based *ribā* corporate interests turned Japan and Germany, after the two world wars, into productive consumers and consuming producers without any independent character of their own?

Thanks to the affluence of the US and its global reach, Germany and Japan stand out as countries without muscle, states without significant militaries, and peoples without full autonomy. They have, of course, the trappings of all these things; but only because the US is confident now that they will not exercise any independent power counter to the larger interests of the US and the global capitalist elite. The US, and its Euro-capitalist and *ribā-rationalizing* Zionist allies, will never have this kind of confidence in any Muslim country or people. Are the Iraqis, void of awareness of these *āyāt*, doomed to the fate of other nation-states conquered, defeated, and controlled by the usurious establishment of the US military-industrial complex and its global allies?

Yet the rapacious policies of the USA and its allies in the global capitalist order do not always have it their way. After WWI, they tried to collect more than \$30 billion in reparations from Germany. This was more than twice Germany's annual gross domestic product (GDP) at the time. And what happened? Adolf Hitler and Nazism took hold of the country instead.

Nobody can say with any authority how large Iraq's foreign debt is today — a debt that accumulated due to usurious practices, wars of aggression, and several years of economic sanctions.<sup>222</sup> Even excluding exploitative oil contracts of a wasteful nature, which will most probably be rendered irrelevant by future and current agreements that Iraq's new government is obliged to sign with US companies, Iraq's foreign debt, including war claims, could still exceed \$300 billion. Just "servicing" such a debt at a "nominal" *ribā* rate of 5% would cost \$15 billion per year; and that would do nothing to reduce the principal owed. A US Department of Energy analysis reported that oil industry experts generally assess Iraq's current sustainable oil production capacity at no higher than about 2.8–2.9 million barrels per day, with net export potential of around 2.3–2.5 million barrels per day. Exporting 2.5 million barrels per

day at a price of \$60 per barrel (the current price of the OPEC basket of 12 crudes) would generate \$52.5 billion a year for Iraq.<sup>223</sup>

In the short term, therefore, Iraq cannot conceivably pay the due *ribā* (that is, Iraq cannot “service its debt”), make payments against the principal, refurbish its dilapidated oil sector, and finance its reconstruction. The repayment program could become even more problematic if the oil price drops. Iraq’s oil-wealth could over the long term finance its reconstruction, if the burden of its external debt were substantially written off — whatever price there may be for that to be done. With an export potential of seven million barrels per day achievable within about six years, Iraq could be generating about \$153.3 billion per year at a price of \$60 per barrel.

This is the tempting and insidious profit-multiplying *ribā* calculation that throws armies into war and countries into conflagrations. In the aftermath of the 2003 US occupation of Iraq, reconstruction contracts worth billions of dollars for the reconfiguration of Iraq were handed out by the US government, offering delirious profits to a few favored companies, many with high-level contacts in the George W. Bush administration and a history of donations to the Republican party. These rebuilding contracts were allocated exclusively to US firms and, instead of the usual tendering process, were by invitation only. The connections between these companies and the Bush administration were substantial. Bechtel was one of the six construction firms chosen to bid; from 1974–1982, George Shultz, the secretary of state in the Reagan administration, was an executive at the firm, eventually becoming its president, and later served as a member of its board of directors. Former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger was the vice president, director, and general counsel of the Bechtel Group of companies. Jack Sheehan, a senior vice president with Bechtel, was on the Defense Policy Board, the Pentagon advisory group that cooked up intelligence to justify the invasion of Iraq. Other firms that came in for the “legal looting” of Iraq were Halliburton, the company once run by Dick Cheney, the notorious vice president in the Bush administration; and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Ray Hunt, a director of Hallibur-

ton, was on the president's intelligence advisory board. Lawrence Eagleburger, secretary of state under President George H.W. Bush, was also a Halliburton director. Kenneth Oscar, the vice president of Fluor, another of the six bidders, was a former army secretary and used to oversee a portion of the Pentagon's budget. Fluor's board also included Bobby Inman, a former deputy director of the CIA. Elaine Chao, former secretary of labor in the Bush administration, worked on the board of another of the six, Parsons, before joining the government.<sup>224</sup>

And what about Iraq's oil profits, now that a new administration has entered the White House? Will the Iraqi people decide what to do with them or will the imperial power muscle in on the country's new oil policy? Because the occupation of Iraq has given the US public image a black eye, Obama and his staff have been busy rebranding the occupation, a Madison Avenue window dressing that all Democratic administrations in the US are very good at. Listen to the recent comments of Michael Schwartz, author of *War Without End: The Iraq War in Context*, which explains how the militarized geopolitics of oil led the US to dismantle the Iraqi State and economy while fueling a sectarian civil war,

After all, there can be no question that the Obama administration's policy is indeed to reduce what the Pentagon might call the US military "footprint" in Iraq. To put it another way, Obama's key officials seem to be opting not for blunt-edged, Bush-style militarism, but for what might be thought of as an administrative push in Iraq, what Vice President Joe Biden has called "a much more aggressive program vis-à-vis the Iraqi government to push it to political reconciliation."

An anonymous senior State Department official described this new "dark of night" policy recently to *Christian Science Monitor* reporter Jane Arraf this way, "One of the challenges of that new relationship is how the US can continue to wield influence on key decisions without being seen to do so."

Without being seen to do so. On this General Odierno and the unnamed official are in agreement. And so, it seems, is Washington. As a result, the crucial thing you can say about the Obama administration’s military and civilian planning so far is this: ...put all that talk of withdrawal aside for a moment and ...what is vaguely visible is the silhouette of a new American posture in Iraq. Think of it as the Obama Doctrine. And what it doesn’t look like is the posture of an occupying power preparing to close up shop and head for home ...you begin to identify a deepening effort to ensure that Iraq remains a US client state, or, as General Odierno described it to the press on June 30th, “a long-term partner with the United States in the Middle East.”

All the features of classic colonialism took shape in the Bush years in Iraq and are now, as far as we can tell, being continued, in some cases even strengthened, in the early months of the Obama era.

The US embassy in Iraq, built by the Bush administration to the tune of \$740 million, is by far the largest in the world. It is now populated by more than 1,000 administrators, technicians, and professionals — diplomatic, military, intelligence, and otherwise — though all are regularly, if euphemistically, referred to as “diplomats” in official statements and in the media.

Such a concentration of foreign officialdom in such a gigantic regional command center ...certainly signals Washington’s larger imperial design: to have sufficient administrative labor power on hand to ensure that American advisors remain significantly embedded in Iraqi political decision-making, in its military, and in the key ministries of its (oil-dominated) economy.

The intrusive presence of the Baghdad embassy extends to the all-important oil industry, which today provides 95% of the government’s funds. When it comes to energy, the occupation has long sought to shape policy

and transfer operational responsibility from Iraqi state-owned enterprises of the Saddam Hussein years to major international oil companies. In one of its most successful efforts, in 2004, the US delivered an exclusive \$1.2 billion contract to reconstruct Iraq's decrepit southern oil transport facilities (which handle 80% of its oil flow) to KBR, the notorious former subsidiary of Halliburton. Supervision of that famously mismanaged contract, still uncompleted five years later, was allocated to the US Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

The Iraqi government, in fact, still exerts remarkably little control over "Iraqi" oil revenues. The Development Fund for Iraq (whose revenues are deposited in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York) was established under UN auspices just after the invasion and receives 95% of the proceeds from Iraq's oil sales. All government withdrawals are then overseen by the UN-sanctioned International Advisory and Monitoring Board, a US-appointed panel of experts drawn mainly from the global oil and financial industries.

In the meantime, the campaign to transfer administration of core oil operations to the major oil companies continues. Despite the resistance of Iraqi oil workers, the administrators of the two national oil companies, a majority bloc in parliament, and public opinion, the US has continued to pressure the al-Maliki [*sic*] administration to enact an oil law that would mandate licensing devices called production-sharing agreements (PSAs).

If enacted, these PSAs would, without transferring permanent ownership, grant oil companies effective control over Iraq's oil fields, giving them full discretion to exploit the country's oil reserves from exploration to sales.

...the Iraqi oil industry would become more deeply embedded in the occupation apparatus, no matter what officially happens to American forces in that country. Among other things, the American embassy would



almost certainly be responsible for inspecting and guiding the work of the contract-winners, while the US military and private contractors would become guarantors of their on-the-ground security.

In 2007, Alan Greenspan, former head of the Federal Reserve, told *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward that “taking Saddam out was essential” ...because the United States could not afford to be “beholden to potentially unfriendly sources of oil and gas” in Iraq. It’s exactly that sort of thinking that’s still operating in US policy circles: the 2008 National Defense Strategy, for example, calls for the use of American military power to maintain “access to and flow of energy resources vital to the world economy.”

After only five months in office, the Obama administration has already provided significant evidence that, like its predecessor, it remains committed to maintaining that “access to and flow of energy resources” in Iraq...<sup>225</sup>

On a related note, before Timothy Geithner became the Obama administrations’s treasury secretary, he was serving as the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the same bank that receives 95% of the revenues from “Iraqi” oil sales.

The way *ribā* is mentioned in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* and the way it is mentioned here, in *Sūrah Āl 'Imrān*, requires some comparison. In *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, *ribā* and *ṣadaqah* were mentioned together. The inference was that *ribā* (coercive spending) and *ṣadaqah* (cooperative spending) represent two diametrically opposed concepts that are at the root of two dissimilar economic orders: *ribā* represents the capitalist freedom to accumulate unlimited wealth even if widespread poverty results, and *ṣadaqah* stands for the Islamic responsibility to distribute wealth even if that means the diminution of the wealthy class. *Ribā* institutions and establishments are inaugurated by the military-commercial complex, and *ṣadaqah-based* administrations are pioneered by the Islamic movement and its forms of governance.

In *Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān*, *ribā* is discussed in the context of war. Aggressive wars serve to open up new frontiers for the expansionist and usurious financial dealings of the military-financial duopoly. The inference here is that without wars of aggression, whether in their colonialist, imperialist, or post-imperialist modes, *ribā* would be drastically reduced to its primitive size. And once it is stripped of its military and individualistic proportions it becomes easier to identify by “Muslims” who have failed to identify its transnational range of destruction and devastation.

The Muslims who read this Qur’an must begin to understand what Allah (ﷻ) is telling them. It is not a matter of happenstance that the military campaign at Uḥud and its cruel circumstances are framed with an emphasis on *ribā*. Someone in a position to make policy must decide whether or not to have *ribā* as part of the economy, and hence part of the military and social reality of society. The right decision has to be made despite the infatuation with wealth of *pro-ribā* officials, in line with the aversion for poverty by *anti-ribā* administrators. The promoters of *ribā* will justify their position with arguments about “free-market” and “trickle-down” economics, the dynamics of “supply-and-demand,” and the insistence that “the market has a way of balancing itself out.” But the world today is suffering from the results of precisely these arguments. The relations between people within societies are strained, and the relations between rich and poor countries in the world are fraught with distrust because of the failure of these theories. Or perhaps, in a certain sense, it would be more appropriate to say “the *success* of these theories,” because it is the world’s wealthy who promote them. The fact is that more and more of the resources of the world are falling into the hands of fewer and fewer rich people, while increasing numbers of people, even in wealthy countries, are suffering from poverty and hardship.

This is the moment for responsible and insightful Muslims to move in and tip the balances of God-given resources toward the oppressed and deprived peoples of the world. Hunger and disease do not discriminate; they strike anyone and everyone who has been victimized by corporate *ribā*. And when decision-making

Muslims weigh the advantages and disadvantages, they also know they have to factor in Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence. Thus, the decision is an offshoot of *taqwá*. When Allah (ﷻ) is in the public mind, it will be easier to spend in times of affluence and in times of poverty. Therefore, one of the fighting points is whether to have Allah (ﷻ) in the public mind or to “privatize” Him. Obviously, those who want a freedom that justifies ravaging the resources of the world would like to exclude Allah (ﷻ) from His power position as the one and only authority in human affairs. They will say, “You mean to tell us that God has something to do with the way we obtain our wealth and the way we invest in our commodities, and the way we run our businesses?” If God is taken out and kept out of people’s common ideas and discussions, then these merchants of wealth will be able to have their way in the short term; in the long run, their misdeeds will catch up with them, and they will be held accountable for disregarding and omitting God from their decisions and policies.

There is a unique type of human who will forego his individual love for personal wealth and comfort, and opt for binding with Allah (ﷻ). It is this type of outstanding human character that responds when Allah (ﷻ) says,

**And be quick to [obtain] forgiveness from your Sustainer, as well as a paradise as vast as the heavens and earth, which is awaiting those who are conscious of Allah [and His earthly power]. [They are] those who spend in times of prosperity and in times of scantiness, [they are those] who restrain their anger, who [are prone to] forgive others; and Allah loves those who seek to do what is better. [They are the ones] who, when they deviate or do injustice to themselves, remember Allah and then ask [Him] to forgive them their trespasses! And who forgives such things except Allah? Thereafter, they do not persist in their wrong ways as they become aware [of such dynamics] (3:133–136).**

All the potential earthly profits, accumulation of wealth, and lucrative investments that are *ribā-based* cannot substitute for this human interaction with Allah (ﷻ). But all of this becomes the share of those who are immediately, currently, and endlessly conscious of Allah's (ﷻ) proximity and company. This elevated human character, who gives regardless of social status, must become the objective of aspiring Muslims. Wealth and need can have different effects on different people. Some people feel privileged or arrogant if they have abundant wealth; other people feel broken or submissive if they are poor. An Islamic character is one that rises above both these "innate" valuations of a divinely unsocialized human nature. This is because an Islamic character is intertwined with the social reality around; it is not confined to the cloistered ego of an individual and his particular circumstances. And beyond that, the Islamic character is lodged in its relationship with Allah (ﷻ). This relationship fosters a loving and cooperative responsibility with all life around it; especially human life. This intimacy with Allah (ﷻ) has a liberating effect on people who would otherwise be stingy or miserly. No one should have any doubt about the fact that every human being is fond of wealth, money, and possessions. But the human being who "lives with Allah (ﷻ)" is the one who is not trapped by either the abundance or scarcity of wealth, money, and possessions.

Some people tend to characterize this as an argument for asceticism and a mystical abandonment of the fortunes and opportunities of the world. This is contrary to the understanding of Allah's (ﷻ) teaching in this Book. It is better to have and then to give than to not have and not be able to give. *Infāq*, *ṣadaqah*, and *zakāh* are all the acts of people who gain and give, make money and spend money, and obtain wealth and redistribute it. A person who has two billion dollars and endows and empowers others with one billion is on par with a person who has two dollars and endows and empowers others with one dollar; each one gave half of all he has. The difference is that the billionaire still has a considerable amount of money to live on, and should be more willing to give a billion, while the two-dollar man has only one dollar left and may

understandably be unwilling to give even a dollar. The regrettable irony is that the poor are often more willing to share half of what they have while the rich are willing to share far less of what they have. This may be one explanation of why the oppressed in general may be closer to Allah (ﷻ) than are the abundantly rich. And yet, those who are rich often behave like the stereotypical poor who “save every penny,” and those who are poor often behave with the magnanimity that the rich ought to have, if their fortunes were reversed. The difference is in those who live within the fold of Allah (ﷻ): they do not calibrate their generosity on the ebb or flow of money and wealth. They just give, period.

This reference to giving and sharing should weigh more on the human conscience during a time of war than at other more socially comfortable times. Societies that are at war are especially vulnerable. The public budget is reduced by the demands of war; this is not a time for anyone to withhold contributions for the well-being of society and the areas that may be damaged by enemy attacks. War also has its ripple effects inside of society. People tend to get war-weary, stressed, and frightened. Once again, the high character of Muslims shines through: they are the ones who have disciplined themselves and are compassionate toward others. This is a quality of high-caliber Muslims who understand *taqwá* and show it in their personal behavior with others. The Qur’an balances our personalities: while we are conscious of Allah’s (ﷻ) power when it is hardest to do so at times of war, we maintain that same consciousness in our dealings on the home front, showing understanding toward those who may not manage to maintain the best behavior themselves. The personality traits exhibited by these exceptional Muslims are their control over their own feelings — particularly aggressive ones such as anger — and gentleness toward others. These are two important and complementary steps: containing one’s passions, and embodying compassion toward others.

At the root of this psychological refinement is the resolution or denial of anger. Anger is potentially offensive and offending. It is a feeling of displeasure on account of some injury, real or imaginary, with an inordinate desire for revenge, and a desire for gaining

satisfaction by lashing out at an offender. Anger is not always vicious; there can equally be anger for justice and anger for self. Anger is just when the cause of it is just, that is, when the feeling is moderate and the retribution commensurate with scriptural norms, and not moved by revenge. Unjust anger is contrary to the spirit of scripture. Unjust anger leads to hostility and belligerence, and these lead to many other interpersonal acrimonies and societal fissures. It hurries its victim into contentiousness, enmities, hatred, revenge, quarrelling, blasphemies, oaths, cursing, and other uncontrolled and unacceptable behaviors. It is the constant awareness of Allah's (ﷻ) power presence that tempers this deviance and inhibits such unsociable conduct. Anger may ferment into vendettas or long-running feuds. These sociopathic characteristics belong neither in a Muslim's psychology nor in his society.

Muslims who are thoughtful of Allah (ﷻ) know they are fighting a war on two fronts. They have a military war to win, as well as a psychological one. The vastness of these holy words is that they remind the Muslims of their mission on every front.<sup>226</sup> In the middle of the campaign of Uḥud, when the Muslims are informed of the combined military and usurious forces, they are also reminded of their internal battlefield where another type of warfare rages,

**...and those who are guilty of moral deviation or do injustice to themselves remember Allah and ask Him to forgive them their flaws — and who forgives [these] flaws besides Allah? And [then] they do not persist in doing what is wrong as they gain an awareness and [new] knowledge [dawns on them] (3:135).**

In other words, Allah (ﷻ) is asking you to forgive others their trespasses, as He is richly offering to forgive your own. This forgiveness is easily diffused and spread from Allah (ﷻ) to His subjects and to the rest of His creation. This *āyah* talks about those who are fervently aware of Allah's (ﷻ) power, the *muttaqīs*, and then it indicates that they, too, can fall into some serious moral failings. And still Allah (ﷻ) and those who are closely with Him in their thoughts and feel-

ings are willing to excuse man’s unintentional and aberrant misdeeds. They may still be considered in the circle of *muttaqīs* provided they defer to and return to Allah (ﷻ) after their lapse. Their delinquency causes them to come to Allah (ﷻ) pleading for amnesty and demonstrating a strong determination not to repeat such blunders. This is very different from other human types who brag about their immorality, sinfulness, and perversions. And this is the difference between those who still hold on to Allah (ﷻ) even when they slip into “sin” and then work themselves out of it, and those who break away from Allah (ﷻ) and do not feel bad about it.

This *āyah* is very encouraging for man, his nature, and his weaknesses. That someone who yearns to be close to Allah (ﷻ) does something wrong does not mean he should be excluded from Allah’s (ﷻ) mercy, acceptance, and sympathy. If human beings were to turn mechanically technical with themselves they would all be excluded from Allah’s (ﷻ) mercy and grace. In anticipation of this type of human discourtesy toward their own, He tells them in these direct words that He is willing to offset their moral misdemeanors and violations if they outgrow their moments of weakness, identify their deviant conduct, start a new life, and demonstrate they will not repeat the same mistakes. Allah (ﷻ) tolerates the oppression of imposed political authorities for a short time, but not the oppression of self-inflicted guilt beyond redemption.<sup>227</sup>

This does not mean that Allah (ﷻ), the Prophet (ﷺ), the Qur’an, and Islam are advocating libertine lifestyles. No one who commits a moral or legal error should for one moment have an excuse for such an act. “Let us be practical” does not and cannot become the first sentence on a path to self-destruction, social perversion, and the rationalization of sin. We humans were born with a strong sense of *ḥayā’* (reticence, discretion, constraint, and moral introversion). This feeling is central to our conscience. We abhor and avoid immorality and illegality as defined by scripture and as embedded in our human nature to satisfy Allah (ﷻ) and our sense of right and wrong. This strong inner sense of *ḥayā’* makes it very difficult for us, knowing that we are with Allah (ﷻ), to do something wrong and insist on it. When that moment in life comes

along, and our very human nature makes it inevitable, where we realize we did something wrong, then we immediately turn to Allah (ﷻ) for exoneration and acquittal, because there is no one else to turn to, no one else who can remit such demerits and errors. **“These it is who shall have remission from their Sustainer and [green] gardens with subterranean rivers, there to live forever. And how excellent a reward for those who work on.”**

Such Muslims do not have a negative attitude. They do not ask Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness and then withdraw from the activities of life, secluding themselves from the forces in society. They are the ones Allah (ﷻ) has commissioned to go to the battlefield and take the political and economic initiative from military commanders and financial tycoons who share in promoting the vices that entrap both individuals and societies.

In these *āyāt*, battle is made a duty: Muslims see themselves fighting on multiple fronts; and wherever they may be they know they are with Allah (ﷻ) and He is with them. Muslims here are supposed not just to listen to beautiful Arabic words; they need to extend the meanings of these scriptural Arabic words into their lives with the strength of their sensitive conscience and the energy of their combative confidence. Not only are they required to score a victory against a host of hostile forces but they are also required to score a victory against stinginess and avarice, against anger and contentiousness, and against immorality and sin. All of this is done by referring to Allah (ﷻ); all of this is necessary for a resounding victory. A short-term victory is sometimes easy to come by, especially if it is a military victory. But a lasting victory is one that extends from defeating the internal Shayṭān all the way to his armed presence on the battlefield.

Within the larger social milieu of systems that bring order — or disorder — to the complex workings of society, this point needs further clarification. The Islamic military did not go to Uḥūd to wage a war against individuals who were personally immoral and in violation of all scriptural moral standards; this Islamic military, though, did go to Uḥūd to fight an army that was instrumental in trying to preserve a *ribā* financial system and its political establish-



ment. This is how the Muslims today and tomorrow should view the wars of aggression that will come their way whether they like it or not. When their jihad develops into full-fledged combat they will be fighting individuals who may or may not be morally corrupt and irredeemable; that is beside the point. The point is this: the army that launches its war against the committed Muslims, as happened at Uḥud, is an army that stands for, represents, and carries the corporate interest and *ribā* to new frontiers. Sometimes the irony of this “clash of the titans” is that there are many oppressed individuals who may have joined their government’s military not to fight against Muslims or anyone else, but simply to gain some educational benefits, to learn a skill, or to escape from harsh economic conditions. It is these same economic conditions that the Muslim armed forces are fighting against, but many of those who are their presumed adversaries cannot understand this.

In the middle of this crucial war at Uḥud, some archers who were given a specific mission to defend the Muslim forces from encirclement by the *mushriks* abandoned their positions when they thought that battle had been won; they wanted to seize whatever spoils they could get their hands on. Although the Islamic armed forces were at war with the rush to wealth, which defines the *ribā* financial system, some of the Muslims at the war front themselves suffered from a desire for quick personal gain. But these Muslim archers did not stand for institutional *ribā* and its enabling government; on the contrary, they were ready to fight and die for opposing a *ribā-based* order. But those few minutes of human weakness in a handful of Muslims compromised the entire Muslim army, allowing the *mushriks* to exploit an opportunity to it, almost resulting in utter defeat for the Muslims, led by Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ).

## Civilizational Longevity and Fidelity to Social Laws

The next set of *āyāt* apprise societies of social laws that are applicable to conditions of war and how they relate to Islamic principles and purposes. To begin with, Allah (ﷻ) advises the Islamic vanguard about how to deal with those who lie and “fabricate facts.” From the rumors and propaganda about this war and the hyperbolic claims of *mushrik* battlefield successes, the fact of the matter was established from above the seven heavens: the tactical reversal of the Muslims at Uḥud was not final and could not be regarded as a strategic victory for the *mushriks* of Makkah. There are many details that have to be reconsidered from this less-than-victorious ordeal at Uḥud. When fighting Muslims encounter stiff resistance and successful military maneuvers by the *mushriks*, they should not be disheartened or demoralized. Faith in the superiority of Allah’s (ﷻ) position and patience in adversity should outweigh such feelings.

- (3:137) [Many] social laws have passed away before your time. Go, then, into [the territories of] the world and behold what happened in the end to those who falsified [the truth];
- (3:138) This [should be] a clear lesson to all men, and a guidance and a word of advice to those who are conscious of Allah’s power.
- (3:139) Be not, then, discouraged, and grieve not: for you are bound to rise high if you are [truly] committed to Allah.
- (3:140) If misfortune befalls you, [know that] similar misfortune has befallen [other] people as well; for it is by cycles that We apportion to men such days [of fortune and misfortune]: and [this] for Allah’s purpose of distinguishing those who have committed themselves to Him, and to select from among you such as [with their lives] bear witness to the truth — since Allah does not love offenders —
- (3:141) And that Allah might render clean of all impurity those who have committed themselves to Allah, and bring to naught those who deny Him [and His power].

قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ  
 كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ  
 لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
 مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ إِنْ يَمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ  
 وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
 وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَلِيَمْحِصَ اللَّهُ  
 الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَمْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ  
 وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ  
 كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ نَظُرُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾  
 وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإَيْنَ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ  
 انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا  
 وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا  
 بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِنْبَأً مُوجِبًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ  
 يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَكَلَّا إِنَّ  
 نَبِيَّ قَتَلَ مَعَهُ رَبِّيُونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا

ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلَّا  
 أَنْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا  
 وَأَنْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمِنَ الَّذِينَ نَبَّهْتُمُ اللَّهُ عَلَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا  
 مِنْكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُوا أَمْرَهُ وَطَعَنُوكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فَيَا  
 كُفْرًا يَكْفُرُ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ كُنْتُمْ بِالْأَعْيُنِ وَهُمْ لَا تُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِمَّا يَشْعُرُونَ  
 وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ مَا يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ مِثْلًا لِحَسَنٍ لِيُضَاعَفَ لَهُ حَسَنَاتِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٤٨﴾

- (3:142) Do you reckon that you will enter paradise while Allah has yet to verify your struggle [in His cause], and to verify your patience in adversity?
- (3:143) For, indeed, you did long for death [in Allah's cause] before you came face to face with it, and now you have seen it with your own eyes!
- (3:144) But Muhammad is only a messenger who was preceded by [other] messengers [who also passed away]; so if he dies or is killed will you retreat and fall back? And whoever does so shall not in the least do harm to Allah [but rather to himself], and Allah will make compensations for those who are thankful.
- (3:145) And no human being can die save by Allah's leave, at a term preordained. And if one desires the rewards of this world, We shall grant him thereof; and if one desires the rewards of the life to come, We shall grant him thereof; and We shall requite those who are grateful [to Us].
- (3:146) And how many a prophet has had to fight [in Allah's cause], followed by many God-devoted men; and they did not become faint of heart for all that they had to suffer in Allah's cause, and neither did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves [before the enemy], since Allah loves those who are patient in adversity;

- (3:147) And all that they said was this, “O our Sustainer! Forgive us our sins and the lack of moderation in our doings! And make firm our steps, and support us against people who deny You [Your power]!”
- (3:148) Whereupon Allah granted them the rewards of this world, as well as the goodliest rewards of the life to come: for Allah loves the doers of good (Āl ‘Imrān:137–148).

Whatever happened at Badr and Uḥud has become an example of how social laws are applicable to those who affirm Allah (ﷻ) as well as to those who renounce and contradict Him all the way to the killing fields. Whatever variables may intervene, in the final analysis the people on the side of truth and justice will prevail. This social law found its application during the times of preceding prophets (ﷺ),

...for long ago has Our word gone forth to Our subjects, the scripture-communicators, that verily, they — they indeed — will be supported, and that verily, Our hosts — they indeed — will [in the end] be victorious! (37:171–173).

The law of divine intervention, which has never been accepted by the secular, God-denying mind, is that eventually those who adhere to Allah (ﷻ) will inherit the affairs of the world, “And, of a certainty, after exhorting [man], We laid it down in all the books of divine wisdom that My righteous servants shall inherit the earth...” (21:105).

### **Incontrovertible Social Laws Do Not Allow for God-denial**

Allah’s (ﷻ) will is embedded in the course of history with those recipients of His words who comply and conform to Him. Every state or system that opposes Allah (ﷻ) by fighting against Him and His servants will, sooner or later, be on the losing side. Some people nowadays look to secular and God-denying authorities and societies,

arguing that they are modern, progressive, and ahead of those societies that claim to be conscious and observant of Allah (ﷻ). They compare the USA with the United Arab Emirates, or compare Britain with Bangladesh, or Norway with Nigeria, and say that it appears that those who have given up on God are in a better position than those who say they are God’s beloved ones. A comparison of this kind is misleading for many reasons. The most important one, in the nature of these informative *āyāt*, is that there are two sets of “laws” at work — the physical laws and the social laws. Physical laws explain scientific observations of the material world. Social laws attempt to explain cumulative human experience and scriptural guidance as they define the rise and fall of societies, nations, and civilizations. The God-denying or “God-neutral” West is very advanced in its application of laws that are pertinent to the physical world. That is why they are much ahead of others when it comes to industries, inventions, discoveries, research, and the like. Their “social theories” have been nothing short of unmitigated disaster — or are an impending disaster — shown by the social and ethical disintegration of Western societies.

On the other hand, those areas of the world that still believe they are in conformity with Allah (ﷻ), His Prophets (ﷺ), and scripture seem to be thoroughly ignorant of physical laws and no better when it comes to the knowledge and understanding of the social laws as explained in the many *āyāt* of the Qur’an. The result is that there are Muslim “scholars” such as one this writer recently met, who asked why Muslims should be reading, studying, and memorizing the Qur’an. Where has the Qur’an gotten the Muslims? According to him, we will never be able to advance until we command the languages of science and technology; we the Muslims need to learn English, French, and German so that we can match, if not surpass, the Western world. Little did he realize that by thinking this and by focusing instead on the understanding of the physical laws, he was running away from his responsibility to understand and realize the “social laws” in this studious Scripture; and drawing an escape route for himself and his ilk to take cover for the abdication of their role.

What is rarely realized by diehard secularists, or by religious people who have an inferiority complex, is that Western God-denial is in a race against time. The distance and tension between their growing knowledge of physical laws and their diminishing knowledge of social laws are liable to result in a breakdown that will be the undoing of all Western civilization as we know it. What form this will take is impossible to predict; it could be a destructive and apocalyptic war, or it could be the disintegration of social cohesion, or it may come about by some natural or cosmic catastrophe. But there are ample signs that the uncontrolled pursuit of material wealth and technological progress without thought of the social implications and consequences is causing damage that may already be irreversible.

If history teaches anyone anything, it is that those who accumulate overwhelming power, and then abuse it by dominating, invading, occupying, and colonizing other peoples, are doomed to fall because of the social laws at work. No amounts of advanced technology, superior scientific achievements, or cutting-edge modernity are going to circumvent or annul the laws that man is to understand by reading and examining the meanings contained in this Word of Allah (ﷻ). That is why He tells us here, “[Many] social law applications have come before your time. Go, then, into the [lands of the] world and behold what happened in the end to those who contravened the truth” (3:137).

We should fertilize the meanings of this affirmative Book by taking into consideration what happened to earlier societies, cultures, and civilizations. Look at the powers of ancient and one-time empires such as the Greeks, the Persians, the Romans, the Egyptians, the Indians, the Chinese, the Babylonians, and others; where are they today except on the great ash heap of dead civilizations that were an affront to God and to man? They could not elude the “social laws,” the *sunan*, that were at work when it came to Allah’s (ﷻ) power. Allah’s (ﷻ) power is the power of truth and justice. Truth and justice will prevail, and so will the people who stand for truth and justice. And once again this focus on social laws in the Qur’an is done by examining closely the issue of power throughout time and history, for this is a Book that has “no doubt about it, is

guidance for the *muttaqīs*” (2:2), and “These are messages of the divine Writ, full of wisdom, providing guidance and grace to the doers of good” (31:2–3).

The particulars of Uḥud also reflect these same social laws. After Uḥud, the *mushriks* said that if Muhammad (ﷺ) were truly an apostle, he would not have been beaten at Uḥud. But from understanding the Qur’an and Muhammad (ﷺ), it is clear that these social laws apply to prophets and apostles (ﷺ), just as they do to everyone else. If a prophet is disobeyed by his troops, the results should not be very difficult to figure out. Thus if today’s Muslims properly understand the lesson of Uḥud, they will go to the war front with determination, with more discipline, and with less thought of themselves and their egos.

Imagine the implications if Muslim fighters had scored a resonating military victory at Uḥud, despite all the indisciplines, violations, and defections that took place. This victory would have set the Muslims up for tragic results in future military affairs, because they would have been deceived by “getting away” with all the mistakes and insubordinations that took place on the way to and during Uḥud. In other words, they might have felt that victory was theirs because of who they were and not what they did; or they might have felt that verbal commitments alone were enough to carry the day. This is exactly what they were earlier taught to guard against with regard to the attitude of Banū Isrā’īl. It is reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “If I were to choose between victory or defeat at Uḥud, I would choose defeat.”<sup>228</sup>

In any event, the military setback at Uḥud was not the end of the world. Some Muslims were killed and some *mushriks* were killed; the Muslim casualties were martyrs, the *mushrik* casualties would end up in great torment. Despite the intrigue and differences regarding strategy, despite the lack of internal cohesion, despite the indiscipline of the archers, and despite the mounting Muslim casualties, the combatant Muslims who lived through it were expected not to succumb to psychological wounds or to lose sight of their commitment to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his steely determination. The physical and psychological combat injuries were not confined to



the Muslims; the *mushriks* also sustained similar traumas. If the Muslims at Uhud did not score a decisive victory, they had certainly done so at Badr. These military clashes are battles in a strategic war in which Muslims should be prepared for reversals in an overall movement of gains and successes.

It is through the test of war, with the experiences of bereavement, injury, and trauma, that the caliber of individuals and the cohesion of the rank-and-file are ascertained. The level of commitment that a Muslim professes could not be evaluated were it not for the difficulties and rigors of war, battle, and engagement with the enemy. Another *āyah* refers to this touchstone of the human pledge to Allah (ﷻ), “...so that Allah may separate the wicked from the honorable” (8:37). Ultimately, it is military service that confirms the degree to which a Muslim is truly committed to Allah (ﷻ). Words are free and cheap; anyone can say he will “fight or die” for the cause of Allah (ﷻ). But when the time comes and people are required to “serve Allah (ﷻ)” on the battlefield, their true characters surface and internal conviction is revealed.

It is war that distinguishes truly committed Muslims from lip-service Muslims. If it was not for the duties and responsibilities of war — carrying arms, fighting, and being killed for Allah (ﷻ) — anyone could claim to be a devout and committed Muslim. But when the time comes to die for Allah (ﷻ), to obey His Prophet (ﷺ), to stand up for what is right, to protect the powerless, to establish justice, and to repulse aggression with your very life — at that time there will be some principled Muslims who will step up and go willingly to the war front; and there will be other Muslims who will say and do anything except offer their lives for Allah (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) describes this delineating moment with His defining words, “For, indeed, you yearned for death, [for the sake of Allah] before you came face to face with it; and now you have seen it with your own eyes.”

It was the military responsibilities, including the possibility of dying in the line of duty, that exposed the draft-dodgers, deserters, and dual-loyalists (*munāfiqs*) in the ranks of the Muslim forces. In the heat of battle, there were Muslims who ran away when con-

fronted by the *mushriks*. Other principled Muslims stood their ground, fighting courageously and defending Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). At this moment, with the battle under way, the pre-battle attitude that "we will fight until the finish" appeared to be little more than an empty slogan. This is why Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said, "*Do not yearn for the enemy's encounter; and ask Allah for respite and relief. But when you do encounter the enemy, be steadfast. And remember that paradise is in the shades of swords.*"<sup>229</sup>

Another facet of war between Islam and *kufr* is that when the *kāfirs* think they have scored a victory, they begin to conduct themselves arrogantly and ungratefully. They experience a "false high," and this leads them into future debacles and fiascos.

Secular and *mushrik* states, regimes, and elites rationalize their wars on a number of grounds, sometimes racial, sometimes vengeful, but most commonly economic and financial. Clearly, in the modern world, it is not a stretch to see that wars are justified on the grounds of some "national interest" or for a "prosperous future for our coming generations." Despite the best efforts of spin-doctors, no just or moral argument can ever be made for any of the wars launched and executed by secular governments and powers. From the Islamic perspective on war, social justice and morality are precisely the goals of a war for Allah's (ﷻ) cause. Many *āyāt* describe how a Muslim military emerges from the trials and tribulations of an imposed war,

**[But] do you think you could enter paradise without suffering like those [committed Muslims] who passed away before you? Difficulties and harm befell them, and so shaken were they that the apostle, and the committed Muslims with him, would exclaim, "When will Allah's help come?" Oh, verily Allah's help is [always] near!" (2:214).**

**Do you reckon that you are able to enter paradise while you have not shown Allah who is capable of striving and perseverance [from among you]? (3:142).**

**Do people think that on their [mere] saying, “We have attained to faith,” they will be left to themselves, and will not be tested? Yes indeed, We did verify by tribulation those who lived before them; and so, most certainly will Allah mark out those who prove themselves true [to their responsibilities], and most certainly will He mark out those who are lying [about such responsibilities] (29:2–3).**

Let the outcome be clear: the Muslim fighters at Uḥud and the Islamic society in Madinah suffered dearly at Uḥud. They sustained many casualties. They were, on the face of it, militarily defeated. Many of the most committed Muslims were injured in the course of Uḥud. Seventy of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) companions were killed. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself was injured, bruised, and harmed. He and his companions were bloodstained. These early Muslims who fought at Uḥud were committed to one exceptional human being. Naturally they were shaken and stunned at the turn of events. What is more, this same Islamic camp was the one that had earlier scored a decisive and awe-inspiring victory at Badr; and now it seemed to be going through the throes of utter defeat. This dramatic reversal of events caused even steadfast Muslim fighters to say, “How can this be? How can this happen to us, when we are the Muslims?”

It was at this critical psychological juncture that these war-weary Muslims made history. They, with their injuries and casualties, changed the balance of power between Makkah’s arrogant *mushriks* and Madinah’s struggling Muslims. It is at this groundbreaking and breathtaking juncture that Allah (ﷻ) inspired them with His words and works. He reminded them of His laws that are at work in the human condition, in human nature, and in human societies. None of these setbacks at Uḥud were by chance. They were the inevitable consequences of the violation of incontrovertible social laws that are written and implemented by Allah (ﷻ), even on the field of battle, where bodies bleed and lives are lost. If warring Muslims are committed to Allah (ﷻ), then they should also be aware of His social laws (*sunan*). Just as their bodies are gov-

erned by Allah's (ﷻ) physical laws, their minds and spirits, their morale and discipline, are governed by Allah's (ﷻ) social laws. And there is a unity of purpose between the two.

Once observant Muslims are aware of these facts, they should easily set aside such questions as “but how can this defeat happen to us?” It is both selfish and foolish to expect victory from Allah (ﷻ) just by saying “we are Muslims,” or by vocalizing the articles of faith (*al-kalimah al-shahādah*), or by being born in an Islamic tradition or culture. If Muslim soldiers expect military victory, they have to work for it, with or against all the God-given social laws that govern this earth and all who are on it — first and foremost among them being the obedience of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). These social laws can be summarized as follows,

1. that those who deny Allah (ﷻ) and take issue with His subjects are doomed — sooner or later;
2. that those who ascend to positions of power, and make complex plans to extend their influence through politics and war, will rise and fall according to the justice they do or fail to do; and
3. that sedition and tribulations are means and instruments through which Allah's (ﷻ) subjects are primed for their leading roles. Perseverance and patience are the precursors for the shift of power away from the *mushriks*, and toward the dedicated and expeditionary Muslims.

**[God-ordained] social laws have eventuated in generations before you. Go, then, about the earth and see what occurred in the end to those who distorted the truth [about Allah]. This [should be] a clear lesson to all men, and a guidance and a warning to those who are conscious of Allah's power (3:137–138).**

One thing to appreciate here is that Allah (ﷻ) is speaking about social laws that transcend space, time, and history, even though the immediate audience was of nomadic Arabians at a time when Arabia was an insignificant speck on the map of world histo-

ry, geopolitics, and civilization. This is another evident example of how this Qur’an could not have been the intellectual or literary product of those who received it, given that they were bedouin Arabians. Even now, after 14 centuries, and leaps and bounds of human intellectual progress, no modern societies have a good grip on the social laws that are conveyed to humanity in this Qur’an. The incomparable Word of Allah (ﷻ) was telling those limited and local Arabians to take their minds into the four corners of the earth and learn the lessons of the rise and fall of nations and civilizations. This qualitative and imaginative gap between the life experiences and culture of the peoples of an arid region with little settled life or urban activity, and the unbounded, inexhaustible, and unconditional vision, ambition, and horizons of this Qur’an, is a powerful rebuke to those who claim that the Qur’an, rather than being of divine origin, is the composition of the Arabian mind. All the social theories of our time, tens of generations after the revelation of this Qur’an, are premature and primitive compared to what Allah (ﷻ) teaches in this divine Writ, “[God-decreed] social laws came to bear in historic periods before you.”

These social laws were applicable then and they are applicable now. Just as the consequences of these unchanging social or behavioral laws played out on bygone nations and peoples, they will have the same effects on people today if they behave like their predecessors. The histories of previous civilizations and empires are open books. All truth-seekers and justice-minded people should be able to consider the plight of bygone societies, identify their mistakes, point to their deviations, and assess their excesses, so that we all can understand the social laws that govern the rise and fall of such empires and civilizations, **“Go, then, into the lands of the world and observe what happened in the end to those who lied [about Allah].”** Later in the Qur’an, references — some of them detailed, others brief — to these ancient empires and civilizations will be cited. But the upshot of them all is that those social structures and power systems faded away because they deliberately or effectively decided not to accept Allah’s (ﷻ) guidance. The result was policies that denied Allah (ﷻ) His power prerogatives in the social

dynamics of human life on earth. This should be a vivid lesson to all peoples, and a word of caution to those who are sensitive to Allah's (ﷻ) power, the *muttaqīs*.

Let us reconsider the word *taqwá* within the context of civilizational reality. It has been buried under so many layers of nonsense and mindless assumptions that many readers of the Qur'an do not appreciate its precise implications and meaning. When Allah (ﷻ) speaks about the rise and fall of a society in an advanced state of development, when He affixes man's attention on a commonwealth or a group of countries under a single authority, He is referring to a power consolidation of generational superstructures, as well as a network of technological infrastructures that flourish into "superpowers" or hegemonic powers. But then none of these ever lasted forever; they all disintegrated and collapsed. The issue here is that Allah (ﷻ) expects people who are keenly and particularly aware of His power to be aware of the annihilation of these other "powers" (Egyptian, Roman, Persian, French, British, American, etc). But what can be said about "cultural Muslims" today who do not grasp the power implications of such messages? The whole idea presented here is lost on them because power does not figure into their thinking and their way of looking at the world. The "nomadic" mind is still with the Muslims, even after Allah (ﷻ) has been entreating them for over 14 centuries to apply their intellects to the experiences of vanished civilizations, and to discover the social laws that spelled their doom.<sup>230</sup>

In this *āyah*, Allah (ﷻ) also speaks about the *mukadhdhibūn* (falsifiers, pretenders, and liars). How is this group to be understood in the context of the break-up of civilizations and their ruling elites? Are they the simple men in the street? Are they the middle class in society? Or are they the decision-makers and policy-promoters who are at the helm of society? Or is there a common denominator that threads all of them together? Or when the habit of lying about God becomes established through all layers of society, does time have a consistent recipe for the social disintegration and demise of that "modernity?" These are the questions and references embedded in these *āyāt*, and they have to be understood by

placing these *āyāt* in the events and contexts of our social experiences and histories, so that the social laws working under Allah’s (ﷻ) close supervision can be appreciated. When the Muslims demonstrate the capacity to move with the Qur’an into the flow and ebb of their societal values, standards, and motivations, they will have fertilized theory with practice. This should produce relevant and clear lessons for all men, and clear and applicable guidance for those who are aware of Allah’s (ﷻ) power. And where can Allah’s (ﷻ) power be more evident than in the arena of apparently powerful civilizations and invincible empires that come crashing down and disappear into the pages of history?

If we get a grip on the social regulations (Allah’s (ﷻ) *sunan*) and how they outlive all the power structures that acclaim themselves and accuse Allah (ﷻ), when we familiarize ourselves with these historic and contemporary social laws of divine origin then we are **“...not disheartened, and [we] are not distressed: for we are bound to rise up and rise high if we are [rightfully] committed to Allah.”**

Allah (ﷻ) says that, after we have done our homework, we should not be discouraged when we encounter a setback. Looking at the larger picture from time immemorial to now, and seeing Allah’s (ﷻ) hand at work through these “social laws,” we need never be demoralized. Simply and meekly stated, we who are with Allah (ﷻ) are ascendant. Our flow is with Allah (ﷻ). We have our sights fixed on Allah (ﷻ) while the small-minded tyrants and their limited administrators have their eyes fixed on worldly material: natural resources, consumer markets, higher production, cheap labor, and sources of energy. Because we are with Allah (ﷻ), we seek a qualitative society, meritorious men, and cooperative humanity; and because our enemies concentrate on their budgets, they want quantifiable manpower, competitive man, and a debt-ridden humanity. Would we ever swap roles? Should we ever swap roles? No, not if we are observant and sensitive when it comes to the eternal social laws of Allah (ﷻ). A fervent commitment to Allah (ﷻ) obliges us to rid the human race of its rat-racing sector. In the long journey toward Allah (ﷻ), there will be a prolonged struggle, there will be

bloody wars, there will be sacrifices, there will be setbacks and surprise reversals, but none of that should dilute our commitment to being on the path of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ).

### Battle Scars Go Both Ways

The woe at Uḥud, when the steadfast Muslims looked around and realized the tide of the battle was turning against them, was a tiny aberrational moment in the course of a history with so many other favorable and encouraging moments. Besides, the Muslims were not alone in sustaining pain and anguish; so too were their enemies,

If you are bruised by open wounds, [know that] similar open wounds are inflicted upon [other] people as well; for it is through cycles that We allocate to men such days [of ease and affliction]. And [this is done] for Allah to tell apart those who have committed themselves to Him, and to pick out from among you such as [with their lives] bear witness to the truth — since Allah does not love offenders; and that Allah might render pure of all dross those who have committed themselves to Him, and bring to naught those who reject Him [and His power] (3:140–141).

Āyah 3:140 speaks to a certain human condition. After the battle, mothers and wives approached Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) expressing their anguish and affliction. The Prophet (ﷺ) would respond, “Is this the way a prophet is treated?”<sup>231</sup> It was this consideration that was addressed by Allah’s (ﷻ) words, “**If misfortune befalls you it is also the case that similar misfortune befalls others...**” that is, the opposing *mushriks*.

No one should be under the impression that the Islamic forces at Uḥud were roundly defeated; that was not the case. The undaunted Muslims inflicted around 70 casualties on the *mushriks*; the *mushriks* were under such military pressure that they dropped their own banner and none of their fighting contingent was able to



hoist it up thereafter; finally, one of their women had to lift their flag. It was when the *mushriks* felt they were losing and began to retreat that the Muslim archers left their positions, enabling the *mushriks* to break through the Islamic lines and attack with a vengeance. This is when the tide of Uhud turned against the Muslims. So it was not as if the *mushriks* had the momentum from the very beginning and kept on gaining until they slowly but surely overcame the Muslims. Not at all.

Allah’s (ﷻ) *sunan* were at work here. Muslims cannot expect victory when they cannot maintain their military discipline, when they are not subject to Muhammad’s (ﷺ) leadership, and when they begin to exhibit the characteristics of greed and materialism which they are supposed to be fighting against.<sup>232</sup>

One point that needs to be emphasized is that the brutality of modern warfare is the product of military research and development that are specific to non-Muslim peoples. This new and ugly development of warfare has seeped into Muslim countries via secular governments that are installed and sponsored by centers of colonialist and imperialist *kufir* from Washington to Tel Aviv.

**“If injuries are inflicted upon you [the Muslims] similar injuries are also inflicted upon [those] people also.”** If war were to break out nowadays between militaries that are in possession of these weapons of mass destruction — all secular and *kāfir* regimes — and military forces belonging to freedom-loving Muslims who do not have these types of weapons, then this *āyah* may have to be considered in another light. When there is a marked degree of equivalence between two warring sides, the levels of casualties, injuries, and suffering on both sides are likely to be broadly similar. But how does that apply to the world today, if and when an Islamic force that does not have weapons of mass destruction is forced to engage an enemy that has such weapons, like the disparity between Israel and the Palestinians, the Russians and the Chechens, the Americans and the Afghans, or the Chinese and the Uighurs? Are Muslims required to observe the same rules of war as their enemy when they do not have access to the same types of weapons or their equivalents? Or should Muslims revert to asymmetric warfare to give this

*āyah* its full meaning; that is, if the Muslims are going to suffer a level of wounds, injuries, and casualties, then the enemy should also suffer an equivalent level of wounds, injuries, and casualties. Or could the answer be that even if combatant Muslims are to take on militaries in possession of superior weapons of mass destruction, when the Muslims have no match for that type of “nasty fighting,” Allah (ﷻ) will intervene in the course of war? Will angels descend and become a fighting force that will inflict proportional damage on the contemporary *mushriks* and their brutal militaries, as they did at Uhud? Should this fact not be ascertainable when Muslims maintain awareness of Allah’s (ﷻ) *sunan* — especially when they are at war? Can those who are fighting for Islamic principles, fighting for justice, and fighting to repel the aggression of imposed wars, win the strategic war, even though they may encounter tactical reversals?

No one should doubt that Muslims will face military challenges in the future. The forces of occupation and usurpation of Muslim lands and natural resources are readying their weapons of mass destruction, and they are willing to deploy these weapons without any scriptural conscience whenever they feel their national interests require it. In a real sense the Muslims need to understand the “military factor” as they transition from Islamic neighborhoods and communities to Islamic societies and states. Had it not been for the “military factor” in Madinah, no one would have been able to see through ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy and his coterie of 300 dual-loyalists who appeared to be “Islamic” but whose true allegiance was to the *kāfirs* and *mushriks*. It can take several cycles of going through good times and bad to differentiate committed, covenant-bearing Muslims from the half-hearted hypocrites who find it convenient and stylish to ride the wave of Islam.

An Islamic war is a far cry from a secular war. An Islamic war seeks to curtail the policies and power of the political elite and military establishment of a usurious system. It is ironic to listen to the rubber-stamp mouthpieces of this capitalist establishment as they proclaim their championing of freedom and justice, when in fact all they believe in is the freedom of the jailhouse and the justice of the jungle. Their troops fill themselves with drugs and alcohol to forget

the atrocities they commit; when they are off duty they wander through the red-light districts of towns and cities, trying to satisfy the animal within them after their savage performance against innocent people in such lands as the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan, the Balkans, the Persian Gulf, and now Iraq. They, unlike the *mujāhids* who see themselves as striving to fulfill the will of Allah (ﷻ) in the arena of social laws and military transformations, have to hide from the reality that they are fighting only to expand corporate, national, and elitist interests.

What a difference between these soldiers of the *mushriks*, who fight for materialism and economic gain, and Muslims warriors who fight for economic equality, social justice, and love for Allah (ﷻ). Even Muslims who pretend to be on the side of Allah (ﷻ) are exposed when they are reluctant to step forward and demonstrate they are ready to give their lives when the military moment approaches. Muslims achieved a morale-boosting victory at Badr, and suffered a morale-sapping setback at Uḥud. It is these sweet and sour experiences together that bring out the core and character of those who are willing to do whatever is required to roll back wars of aggression and the voracious appetite of the global capitalist elite. Military engagement, when the worldly odds are apparently against you, is the issue that affirms man’s covenant with Allah (ﷻ), not the private rituals or selfish cultures that have mired the clarity of this *dīn* with inherited traditions and ancestral customs.

It is at this military level of responsibility that Allah (ﷻ) chooses His affirming witnesses, “...and [He] chooses from among you such as [with their willingness to die for Him] bear witness to the truth...” This willingness to fight and die for Allah (ﷻ), the Scripture of Allah (ﷻ), the Apostle of Allah (ﷺ), the standards of Allah (ﷻ) and the principles of Allah (ﷻ) — this willingness to go to war and give one’s life — is the method by which Allah (ﷻ) selects those who will be a witness to His truth and justice. These *shahīds* (witnesses and martyrs) are picked from the ranks of the *mujāhids*. It is an honor to be chosen by Allah (ﷻ) for the awards and laurels of *shahādah*; no person can choose for himself the rank of *shahīd*: it can only be aspired to and hoped for, and our

achieving it is by Allah's (ﷻ) grace. Once a Muslim has made up his mind to take on death itself for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), there is nothing in the world that can dissuade him from his ambition. He actually conquers death by defying it on the battle front. When a combatant Muslim conquers the fear of death he has already located himself in the afterlife, that is, he is with Allah (ﷻ).

At the same time, Allah (ﷻ) does not appreciate offenders, the *ẓālims*. Allah (ﷻ) does not hold people dear who use their military and political power for tyranny and oppression. One of the easiest ways to define these types is to notice how they dismiss God from having any influence on their minds, their plans, their policies, their strategies, and their worldview. Human motivation has to be influenced and driven by values and principles. And these corporate chief executives and military officers are willing to consider and proclaim any set of values and any array of principles, as long as they are not from God. This is a great offense and a cardinal violation of who Allah (ﷻ) is and what He represents in human actions and programs.

Before we conclude our discussion of these *āyāt*, and bearing in mind their particular relevance to the prospects facing future Muslim generations as they accept the military challenge of the historical situation now facing them, we should try to get a better feel for the historical context of the Battle of Uḥud. This will help us grasp some of the implications that will further elucidate the specific meanings of these *āyāt*.

### Historical Details of the Battle of Uḥud

The power elites of Quraysh in Makkah, who had forced the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers to leave Makkah, felt a profound sense of defeat in the aftermath of Badr. Badr was a campaign that drew a defining line between the forces of *kufr* and the forces of *īmān*; and between an army that stood for all that is worldly and false, and an army that stood for all that is heavenly and genuine. In the eyes of the *mushriks*, a crowd of desperate refugees who were expelled from Makkah regrouped in Madinah and then fought and

defeated them at Badr. Such was their shock and frustration that Abū Sufyān said he would not pour water over his body to cleanse himself until he had defeated Muhammad (ﷺ). Shortly after Badr, he set out from Makkah to Madinah with 200 men. They approached Madinah during the night and surreptitiously made their way to the Yahūdī quarter of Banū al-Naḍīr. Abū Sufyān went to see Ḥuyayy ibn Akḥṭab, a Yahūdī strongman. Ibn Akḥṭab was so afraid of this whole encounter that he closed his door as a man in fear would. Then Abū Sufyān went to Salām ibn Mishkam, who at that time was the chief of Banū al-Naḍīr. There was an exchange of hospitality and information between the two. Before daybreak Abū Sufyān sent some of his deputies to a place called al-'Arīḍ. There they burned date palms and killed an individual from the Anṣār along with his companion, both of whom were out tilling the fields. Then all of them set out for Makkah. As the news of these killings spread, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) set out in pursuit of them. When Abū Sufyān realized the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions were catching up with him, he ordered his men to dump their loads so as to be able to ride faster, which they did; and so they managed to escape the pursuit.<sup>233</sup>

Another impact of the Muslim success at Badr was that they forced the merchant *mushriks* of Makkah to change their commercial route. Instead of going north from Makkah to the Levant via the traditional Red Sea coastline of Ḥijāz, where they were defeated at Badr, they instead were compelled to use a northern route east of Madinah in the direction of Iraq. Ṣafwān ibn Umayyāh, a prominent figure in the Makkan aristocracy spoke for Quraysh when he said,

Muhammad and his companions have dealt us a transportation and commercial blow. We now do not know what to do as Muhammad and his supporters are in virtual control of the seacoast. Many people living in that area are either followers or sympathizers of Muhammad. We do not know where to go. If we are not able to transit north we will stagnate and our financial capital will dwindle and diminish in our own town. Our commercial

routes are to the Levant [Damascus and the surrounding areas] in the summer, and toward Ḥabashaḥ [the horn of Africa] in the winter.<sup>234</sup>

One attempt at navigating the desert northward with a commercial caravan carrying a significant load of silver was undertaken by a number of men, including Abū Sufyān. Their guide on this new route in the direction of Iraq was Furāt ibn Ḥayyān. News immediately spread and the Prophet (ﷺ) dispatched a force from Madinah, led by Zayd ibn Ḥārithaḥ, to interdict the caravan. Zayd and the Muslims with him mounted a surprise attack on the caravan at a place in Najd called Mā' al-Qiradaḥ. The *mushriks* fled for their lives, leaving all the cargo behind. The Muslims took possession of the goods and returned successfully to Madinah to disperse them with equity.<sup>235</sup>

These encounters stirred up Quraysh after the Battle of Badr, leaving a deep psychological wound on the elites in Makkah. Without easy access to their traditional commercial transit routes northward to Damascus and Palestine, the noose seemed to be tightening around their merchant livelihood. Their *riḥlata al-shitā'i wa-al-ṣayf* (commercial winter and summer journey, 106:2) was threatened because the power base of Madinah was to their north, between Makkah and Damascus. Their status and prestige among the rest of the Arabians suffered a severe setback; if things were to continue in that direction, then Makkah and by extension Quraysh would no longer exist as before. There were other Arabian tribes and factions waiting and capable of replacing Quraysh as the power-brokers of Makkah.

Some of the families who had lost their sons at Badr called a meeting with Abū Sufyān. Three individuals, 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Rabī'aḥ, 'Ikrimaḥ ibn Abī Jahl, and Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah, went to Abū Sufyān to work out a grand strategy for war against the Muslims in Madinah. They all decided to allocate, for war preparations against Islamic Madinah, the entire value of the caravan Abū Sufyān had escaped with on his way back from Damascus via Badr. Quraysh mobilized all its military manpower and placed the men

under arms. It also enlisted the Aḥābīsh and its allies from the tribes of Kinānaḥ, the people of Tihāmaḥ and Thaqīf to forge one fighting bloc against the Islamic power base. In addition to recruiting some mercenaries, among them Waḥshī who later killed Ḥamzaḥ, the *mushriks* of Makkah also tried to utilize some of the lingering *mushriks* in Madinah who had not yet become Muslims.

In total, the *mushrik* force amounted to 3,000 fighting men; among them there were 700 in armor, 200 on horseback, along with 3,000 camels, which were used as pack animals. Even the women were called for military duties as they played the role of cheerleaders and entertainers. This was to have a dual effect on them. First, they would be embarrassed to run away from the battle in the presence of their wives; and second, they would do all they could to see to it that their wives were not taken captive.

This force was headed by Abū Sufyān himself. He took with him to Uḥud his wife Hind bint ‘Utbaḥ, who was hungry for revenge: her son, brother, and father had been killed by the Muslims. ‘Ikrimaḥ ibn Abī Jahl went with his wife Umm Ḥakīm bint al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām ibn al-Mughīraḥ. Likewise many other Makkani chieftains and soldiers took their wives along. The Makkans even brought poets and preachers with them. They did everything they could to raise their spirits and boost their morale.

One of those who joined the *mushrik* army was Abū ‘Izzaḥ ‘Amr ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Jumaḥī, who had been taken as a prisoner of war at Badr and then released by the Prophet (ﷺ) without a ransom because he was poor and had a large family. The condition for his release was that he would not take part in further anti-Islamic activities, especially verbal provocations, as he was known for his eloquence. But, as happens with many poor people, Abū ‘Izzaḥ was persuaded by Ṣafwān ibn Umayyaḥ to go to Uḥud on the guarantee that he and his family would have a better life after he returned from Uḥud.

Some of these Makkani war preparations were relayed to Muhammad (ﷺ) by his uncle al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who had stayed in Makkah and not gone to Uḥud. In addition to al-‘Abbās, the Prophet (ﷺ) had other informants and “undercover agents” who would pass on sensitive information to him. The

*mushriks* arrived at the outskirts of Madinah near Mt. Uḥud on the first day of Shawwāl in the third *hijrī* year. The battle of Uḥud itself took place on the 11th of Shawwāl or in mid-Shawwāl.

The Prophet (ﷺ) initiated the Muslims' preparations by calling up the committed Muslims, rallying their morale, and involving them in the decision-making process. He stepped up Madinah's defenses, and proposed to his disciples that the Muslims remain in Madinah and let Quraysh waste away wherever they may camp outside the city, "*If they decide to keep their distance away from Madinah they will ominously fall apart; and if they decide to enter into Madinah we will fight them therein.*"<sup>236</sup> This was the Prophet's (ﷺ) plan for urban warfare or hand-to-hand combat. Whenever attackers have more manpower and fighting gear they should be stripped of those advantages by being forced to fight inside a city. Inside the city only its inhabitants know it well; therefore those who are invading are at a serious disadvantage because they can be picked off and gunned down on terrain they are unfamiliar with. This military plan also affords women and children the opportunity to participate in combat to defend their dignity, their homes, and their turf.

But there was another complicating factor, and that was the youth who did not go to fight at Badr. After the Battle of Badr, there were Muslims in Madinah who regretted not going out to Badr with the Prophet (ﷺ), even though it was not clear at the time of departure from Madinah to Badr that there would actually be a military clash with the *mushriks* from Makkah. These Muslims felt they had been denied an opportunity to achieve martyrdom at Badr; and so were enthusiastic about meeting the enemy at Uḥud. They told Muhammad (ﷺ), "O Prophet of Allah! Lead us to our enemies! Lest they think we are cowards and are showing how weak we are by staying inside Madinah!" As the debate between these two positions broke out in public, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Sallūl, the foremost dual-loyalist and collaborator with the Yahūd, disingenuously concurred with Muhammad (ﷺ),

O Messenger of Allah! Stay in Madinah; do not go out to fight them. History has it that whenever we go out of



Madinah to fight an enemy we lose, and whenever an enemy enters Madinah to fight us we win. Leave those *mushriks* alone, O Messenger of Allah. If they wish to stay on the outskirts of Madinah they will have opted for a type of entrapment. And if they decide to enter Madinah our men will take them face on. Our women and children will pelt them with stones from above. And if they decide to return to Makkah they will return with frustration and a furious sense of mission unaccomplished.”<sup>237</sup>

And although this opinion coincided with the way Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) saw things, there were also a good number of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) companions who favored fighting the enemy in a battle formation outside of Madinah. They said, “O Messenger of Allah! We are worried that if we stay in Madinah our enemies will think we are showing fear and timidity. And this would boost their morale and cause more damage to us. At Badr you [Muhammad] had 300 warriors — much less than they had — and still we won and they lost with Allah’s permission. But today our numbers have swollen. We longed for this day. We asked Allah for this encounter and now we have an opportunity in our own backyard [Uḥud].”

Mālik ibn Sīnān said, “O Prophet of Allah! By Allah we are situated between two prestigious desirables: either Allah gives us victory over them or he privileges us with testimonial martyrdom [*shahādah*].” Ḥamzaḥ said, “By He who has revealed His Book to you! I will not have a meal today until I brandish my sword against them outside of Madinah.” Al-Nu‘mān ibn Mālik said, “O Apostle of Allah! Why would you deny us Paradise? By He who is the only Deity, I shall enter paradise.” The Prophet (ﷺ) asked, “*But how?*” He replied, “I love Allah and His Prophet, and I will not run away from war when it breaks out.” Muhammad (ﷺ) said, “*You have said the truth.*” Ayyās ibn Aws said, “O Messenger of Allah! We, Banū ‘Abd al-Ashhal, are yearning to kill and be killed so that we may proceed to Paradise and our enemies may proceed to the Fire. O Messenger of Allah! I cannot think of Quraysh returning to their society and saying, ‘Muhammad forced us to fight in the alleys and

back streets of Yathrib.' This will definitely raise the spirits of Quraysh." 'Abdullāh ibn Jahsh explained it this way, "O Allah! I ask you to have me meet the enemy tomorrow; and they slay me, open up my stomach, smash my nose, cut off my ears... then I want You to ask me, 'But for what?' And I will reply, 'For You.'" <sup>238</sup>

This indicates that the youth were not the only ones clamoring to leave Madinah to fight; many of the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions agreed with the youths' position. This may explain why Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) concurred with the battle plan situated outside of Madinah. He had no doubt about the overwhelming inclination expressed by the majority of his followers to take the battle to Uḥud. And before serious dissent could break out, Muhammad (ﷺ) went into his quarters, put on his military gear, and emerged. When the Muslims who felt strongly about their opinion saw him they felt contrite and guilty for imposing their opinions upon the Prophet (ﷺ). So they said, "We pressured the Messenger and we should not have done so." They offered to relinquish their own feelings about the matter and adopt the Prophet's (ﷺ) view, but his answer to them was, "Once a prophet puts on his armor, he may not take it off until he goes to war. Do as I tell you. You will be victorious if you remain steadfast." <sup>239</sup>

The Prophet (ﷺ) then departed Madinah with nearly 1,000 combatants, while the Muslim women and children took up defensive positions in the garrisons around Madinah. After they had gone some distance 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy broke away with about one-third of the Muslim army and returned to Madinah. As he and his followers were deserting, Ibn Ubayy offered the following alibi in justifying his defection, "He [Muhammad] obeyed them and disobeyed me. People! We do not know why we should be killing ourselves at this time and at this place!" 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥarām followed this breakaway force and pleaded with them to return to their brothers-in-arms, but to no avail.

Due to the now increasing military disparity, some Anṣār wanted to enlist the help of their previous allies, the Yahūd. They actually asked the Prophet's (ﷺ) permission to do so. He answered them saying, "We have no need for them [Yahūd]." <sup>240</sup> The Prophet (ﷺ) was aware that the Yahūd might have been involved on the

*mushriks*’ side and certainly harbored as much animosity toward the committed Muslims as the *mushriks* did. Besides, before Uḥud, the Jewish tribe of Qaynuqā’ had broken the oath of allegiance with the Prophet (ﷺ) and had been forced to depart from Madinah.

From a review of the war preparations for Uḥud, an important piece of information is related to the volunteering of young teenagers for military service. They were not even 15 years old, were not particularly talented shooters, and did not appear to be physically exceptional. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar was one who volunteered but was turned back by Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), and so were Usāmah ibn Zayd, Zayd ibn Thābit and al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib, as well as others.<sup>241</sup> One young teenager Rāfi’ ibn Khadij was known to be an excellent archer and because this was not considered a physically strenuous military duty he was enlisted as a marksman. Samurāh ibn Jundab was another adolescent who applied for military service; Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) was just about to dismiss him when he was told that this boy had the strength to compete with a shepherd. He took a closer look at his physical build and let him join the army.

The Prophet (ﷺ) camped in front of Mt. Uḥud with what was left of the army, around 700 troops. He organized the combatants into ranks, telling them not to fight until he gave orders to engage the enemy. He chose 50 marksmen, whom he stationed in a strategically elevated spot near the base of the mountain, and appointed ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr as their commander. Knowing that the Muslims’ flank had to be secured at any cost, the Prophet (ﷺ) instructed him to be liberal in aiming at and subduing the mounted horsemen of the *mushriks*. Regardless of how the battle was proceeding — either in favor of or against the Muslims — these marksmen were ordered to maintain a consistent pattern of fire against the *mushriks*, and above all they were not to leave their positions, come what may. The Prophet (ﷺ) made it clear to the Muslim archers that everything depends on their securing the Muslims’ rearward position. Some of what he said to them is,

*Guard our backs; we are afraid that they [the mushriks] may attack us from behind. Stay put in your posts, do not go away*

*from them. If you see us being killed do not come to our rescue and do not try to defend us. Your responsibility is to shoot your arrows at their horsemen. Horses do not attack in the direction of flying arrows.*<sup>242</sup>

Some reports say the Prophet (ﷺ) put on two protective armors as a precautionary measure.

Another war tactic employed by the Prophet (ﷺ) was to occupy the front line with strong, vigorous warriors, such as Ḥamzaḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (his uncle), ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (his cousin), and al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām (another cousin of his). All these warriors were a bitter reminder to the *mushriks* of their defeat at Badr. This was a form of psychological warfare: these were the ones who had won the battle at Badr and they could also be the ones to win the war at Uḥud. Before the two armies engaged in the customary opening duels, he gave the Islamic banner to Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr.

On the opposite side, Quraysh had assembled a formidable fighting force against the Muslims. The 200 horsemen were divided into two wings, with the right wing commanded by Khālīd ibn al-Walīd and the left wing by ‘Ikrimaḥ ibn Abī Jahl. The Qurayshī banner was given to Banū ‘Abd al-Dār. Hind bint ‘Utbaḥ, Abū Sufyān’s wife, and the other *mushrik* women took the lead in cheering their soldiers on by playing music and singing buoyant melodic rhythms. Abū Sufyān emboldened the *mushriks*’ fighting spirits with a prewar speech. His troops replied, “Tomorrow when we take them on you will know how we will perform.”<sup>243</sup>

The Muslims countered with their own motto, “*Amit... Amit* [Suffer or face the pain of death].” They all reverberated with this catchword to stiffen their resolve in discharging their divine responsibilities. The Prophet (ﷺ) took out his sword and asked, “*Who is the one to responsibly assume this sword?*” Abū Dujānaḥ asked him, “*What is this sword’s due?*” And he replied, “*To strike with it the enemy until he straggles.*” Then Abū Dujānaḥ said, “*I will assume it [the sword] O Messenger of Allah.*” He took the Prophet’s (ﷺ) sword, and then tied a red headband around his head, according to his personal custom. Then he made his way into the midst of the

engaged combatants, killing every *mushrik* he encountered. Ḥamzaḥ also deftly dispatched many *mushriks* until their leaders began to sense an imminent defeat. It was at this critical juncture that Waḥshī, the slave of Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im, located Ḥamzaḥ and killed him with a throw of his spear.

The battle raged on between the two disproportionate legions. The Islamic morale remained very high and their desire for *shahādah* made the relatively fewer Muslims fight with chivalry, courage, and the confident abandon that comes with knowing there is no tomorrow. As the number of *mushrik* casualties began to multiply, the Muslims began to sense that outright victory was near. Both al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām and al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad acquitted themselves valiantly, making their bold mark on the course of the battle.

The Prophet (ﷺ) himself and those who were by his side took on Abū Sufyān, forcing him to retreat. When Khālid ibn al-Walīd saw Abū Sufyān’s predicament, he tried to push ahead and draw the fighting toward him, but the arrows and spears from the Muslim marksmen were too much, thereby obliging him to make a hasty withdrawal. He tried a second time to move into the thick of the action, but once again the marksmen repelled him, forcing him to withdraw after many of his men were killed and wounded.<sup>244</sup>

Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr fought gallantly in defending Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) until he was killed by Ibn Qami’ah who thought Muṣ‘ab was the Prophet (ﷺ). After Muṣ‘ab fell, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib raised the banner of Islam on orders from the Prophet (ﷺ). The Muslims were putting up stiff resistance, and through all this Allah (ﷻ) was implementing His will through the struggle of His subjects. The Muslim fighters turned the tide of the battle in their favor and as the *mushriks* began to realize they were being beaten, they began to retreat and flee from the battlefield.<sup>245</sup>

However, the Muslims could not sustain this early momentum due to some tragic missteps and blunders. First, the marksmen disobeyed the Prophet’s (ﷺ) orders to maintain their strategic defensive positions on the mountain. And second, these marksmen, many of whom were poor compared to their *mushrik* adversaries, could not resist the financial temptation of the spoils of war that were there,

right in front of their very eyes. ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr reminded them of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) stern orders. But in their blind rush to get “their share” of what the *mushriks* had left behind, they were deaf to their commander’s pleas. There were some marksmen, however, who stayed put, preferring to obey the Prophet (ﷺ) and their ranking officer. Ibn Jubayr along with 10 of his comrades dispersed themselves to fill in the gaps created by the departure of the other 40 archers. This tactic proved to be ineffective as Khālīd and ‘Ikrimah both seized the opportunity and came charging in from behind the mountain, forcing the Muslims to fight on two fronts. Those marksmen who stayed in their positions were either injured or killed as a result. ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr tried to fight them off, emptying his quiver of all its arrows; he then fought bravely with a spear until it broke. But then when his sword snapped, he was forced to fight hand-to-hand against armed adversaries on horseback. Undaunted still, he battled fearlessly until he became a *shahīd*; his abdomen was ruptured by force of multiple spear thrusts, exposing his intestines.<sup>246</sup>

In this commotion and turmoil, a cry went up that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed. Many Muslims, believing this rumor, began to lose heart and started to pull away from the heat of the battle. When the other *mushriks* who were in retreat saw that Khālīd had broken through the Muslim lines, they began to regroup and attack the Muslims; now the Muslims were caught in a pincer operation. Muslims were now the receding victims. Amidst this confusion and rapidly degenerating situation, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not lose control, demonstrating exceptional skill in managing the difficult predicament. Had it not been for the fortitude and resourcefulness of the Prophet (ﷺ), this potentially backbreaking development could have reversed 16 long years of struggle and sacrifice. He rallied the Muslims to quickly regroup and reorganize, lest the *mushriks* take them out one by one. The Prophet (ﷺ), accompanied by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, ‘Umar, Abū Bakr and around 30 other combat-hardened Muslims, speedily withdrew toward a ravine near the mountain.

Many of the other Muslims had already dispersed in different directions to evade the two-sided *mushrik* onslaught. Some of them

made their way back to Madinah, and even considered employing the agency of ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy to go to Abū Sufyān and obtain a security arrangement. They figured that since Muhammad (ﷺ) was now dead, it is only practical to return to previous power arrangements and feel secure rather than to become victims of a genocide. Anas ibn al-Naḍr vociferously objected to what these Muslims were thinking, “If Muhammad did in fact die, Muhammad’s Sustainer did not die. Fight on, then, as Muhammad did. O Allah! I apologize for what these [Muslims] are saying. I foreswear what they are contemplating.” Then he charged into the *mushriks*’ throng and fought bravely until he died a *shahīd*.

In these adverse conditions the Prophet (ﷺ) fought daringly and with valor; he fought until his bow gave in. Even though the war was furious, acrimonious, and mad, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) determination and resolve kept the small contingent of Muslims around him together. But in so doing, many Muslims died while protecting and defending their leader. In one instance six men of the Anṣār fought back the assaults of the *mushriks*. One example of this epic defense of Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) was a person by the name of Ziyād ibn al-Sakan who had sustained 14 different types of wounds on his body while absorbing the ferocious assaults of the *mushriks* as they tried to get to the Prophet (ﷺ). He called upon the Prophet (ﷺ) and insisted on being next to him in his final minutes, and there he died. Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqās was roving around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) with his bow and arrow, targeting all the *mushriks* who tried to attack Muhammad (ﷺ). Abū Dujānaḥ acted as a human shield around the Prophet’s (ﷺ) body, taking arrows and spears intended for Muhammad (ﷺ) in his back. Ṭalḥaḥ ibn ‘Ubaydillāh was another towering figure that fought selflessly in defense of the Prophet (ﷺ). In shielding the Prophet (ﷺ) with his own body, he was hit by an arrow that permanently paralyzed a part of his hand. He fainted after sustaining a profusely bleeding head injury, but upon regaining consciousness, his first question was, “How is Rasūl-Allāh?<sup>247</sup>

In spite of all these valiant defenders, some *mushriks* made it into the direct proximity of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). They exerted the

utmost effort to try to kill him, and as for those who could not get close enough to get a shot, they pelted him and his companions with stones from all directions. The Prophet's (ﷺ) lower tooth was hit, his face was cut, his lip was split, and two chain links from his armor became lodged in his cheek; blood was flowing on his face. As he wiped away the blood, he said, "How can a society be successful when they have bloodied the face of their Prophet who is introducing them to Allah?"<sup>248</sup>

It is reported that throughout all his military campaigns the Prophet (ﷺ) killed only one God-denying combatant: Ubayy ibn Khalaf. Ubayy had boasted in Makkah that he would kill the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Instead, I shall kill him, Allah willing." During the battle in its most tense and uncertain moments when the Muslims were reconsolidating their battle position, Ubayy made it within striking distance of Muhammad (ﷺ) and said, "O Muhammad! Death is my due if you escape [from this quandary]!" The Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ) immediately turned toward Ubayy, but the Prophet (ﷺ) restrained them, saying, "Leave him alone." As Muhammad (ﷺ) approached him, he took a spear from al-Ḥārith ibn al-Ṣimmaḥ and plunged it into Ubayy's collarbone, who fell off his horse writhing in pain. His last words were, "The pain I have is enough to kill a population." Ubayy ultimately died on his way back to Makkah.<sup>249</sup> The Qur'an outlines this by the following words, "**...and it was not you who opened fire when you took aim, but it was Allah who did so...**" (8:17).

Several Muslim women also distinguished themselves on the field of battle. It is documented that women joined in the war effort: they fetched water for the *mujāhids*, nursed those who were injured, and if need be carried arms and fought. One narrative reports that Umm 'Amārah Nusaybah al-Māziniyah joined the army and felt responsible for procuring water supplies. She also tried to raise their morale. When, in the course of Uḥud, she saw the *mushriks* close in on the Prophet (ﷺ), she took a sword and stepped up to defend him. She also used arrows to ward off the attackers, and in the end, was severely injured while fighting to defend the Prophet (ﷺ).



Another narrative about Umm ‘Amārah indicates that she fought with her husband and two sons. When one of her sons was bleeding profusely from a gash in his left arm, she bandaged his wound and encouraged him to stand up and resist the attackers. The Prophet (ﷺ) was also amazed at her valiant effort, saying, “Umm ‘Amārah! Who can bare what you are going through?” He turned to his companions and said, “I see her wherever I turn, left and right, defending us!” She asked Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), “Ask Allah to have us in your company in paradise. I do not care what happens to me in this world!” After suffering 12 wounds in defense of the Prophet (ﷺ) — some from spears and some from swords — she herself finally achieved her *shahādah*. Another Muslim woman combatant at the war front, al-Sumayrā’ bint Qays, suffered the loss of her two sons. When the news of her beloved sons’ deaths was relayed to her she asked, “But how is the Apostle (ﷺ)?” She was told, “...he is fine; he is with thanks to Allah (ﷻ) as you may want him to be.” She insisted, “Let me see him.” They pointed to him and she was relieved, “Any loss after losing you is a tragedy.”<sup>250</sup> Umm Ayman, another Muslimah with high spirits, saw some Muslim warriors who had disengaged when the tide was turning against the Muslims. She threw dirt in their faces and chided, “[Why don’t you] pick up the sewing needles and sew.”<sup>251</sup>

Fāṭimah, the daughter of Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ), washed the blood off her father’s noble face and tended to his wounds. While Fāṭimah washed his wounds, ‘Alī poured the water. And when the blood would not stop flowing, she burned a straw mat and placed the ashes on the wound to act as a clotting agent.<sup>252</sup> It would appear from these accounts that innocent Fāṭimah joined the other *mujāhids* at Uḥud, and tended to the wounded, among them her own father, the Prophet (ﷺ).<sup>253</sup>

The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the Muslims around him to retreat closer toward Mount Uḥud and to bombard the *mushriks* with stones and rocks. He directed all their efforts to secure the mountain so that the *mushriks* would not be able to descend on them from the summits of Uḥud. Some Qurayshīs tried to encircle the Muslims again but they were driven back by a contingent of the Muhājirūn. The

Prophet (ﷺ) himself was so fatigued and weighed down with armor that on his attempt to climb a rock near the base of Uḥud, he could not. Ṭalḥaḥ knelt down on the ground, acting as a stepping stone, for the Prophet (ﷺ) to mount the rock. When the spirited Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ) showed their determination to fight on and to fight to the end, the *mushriks* realized they would not be able to kill en masse this core of staunch prophetic supporters. From the intensity of the physical combat, the *mushriks* were also burned out; they were physically injured and as a contingent battle-scarred. They thought that, by dispersing most of the Islamic fighting force and by pushing the rest of the Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ) into “a tight defensive position” at Uḥud, this sounded like a victory. So they collected their gear and began to withdraw their forces.

In the aftermath of Uḥud, Abū Sufyān went up the mount and stayed there for an hour or so. Then he said, “Where is the son of Abū Kabshaḥ [referring to Muhammad (ﷺ), as Abū Kabshaḥ was the husband of Ḥalīmaḥ al-Sa’dīyah, who was Muhammad’s (ﷺ) wet-nurse]? Where is Ibn Abī Quḥāfaḥ [Abū Bakr]? Where is Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb?” ‘Umar answered, “Here is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and Abū Bakr, and myself ‘Umar.” Then Abū Sufyān said, “One for one [meaning Uḥud for Badr]. Hubal rises!” What goes around comes around. War is a matter of give-and-take.”<sup>254</sup> Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) told ‘Umar to call out, “Allah is higher and above; [war] is not the same: our deceased are in paradise, while your deceased are in the Fire.”<sup>255</sup> Abū Sufyān answered back, “That is what you claim; and if your claim was right we would have been the definite losers [in this battle].”<sup>256</sup> Then Abū Sufyān motioned to ‘Umar to come closer, asking him, “By Allah O ‘Umar! Did we not kill Muhammad?” ‘Umar answered back, “By Allah, you did not. He can hear you speaking now.” Then Abū Sufyān parted saying that their next encounter will be at Badr the next time around. The Prophet (ﷺ) told ‘Umar to concur by saying in effect “it’s a deal.”<sup>257</sup> At this point the fighting was technically over. The Muslims suffered more than 70 war casualties. The *mushriks* lost no more than 35.

As the *mushriks* were withdrawing from the battlefield, and with all that had gone wrong during the battle still fresh on his

mind, the Prophet (ﷺ) calculated that the *mushriks* may still attack Madinah. Therefore, he dispatched ‘Alī to trail them and see what they may be up to. He instructed that if they were to ride their camels adjacent to the mountain and dismount their horses, then this would mean they were now on their way back to Makkah; but if they were to mount their horses and drive their camels then that would mean they intended to attack Madinah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “By He who has my life in His hand, if they are seeking [to attack] Madinah I will personally take them on within Madinah.”<sup>258</sup> ‘Alī returned and informed the Prophet (ﷺ) that they were riding their camels and moving in the direction of Makkah. As a precautionary measure, the Apostle (ﷺ) sent off a contingent of 70 combatants to pursue the *mushriks* and make sure they will not make an unexpected comeback toward Madinah.<sup>259</sup>

As the surviving Muslims went out to confirm their war dead, the Prophet (ﷺ) inquired whether Sa’d ibn al-Rabi’ was still alive. He was found mortally wounded among the corpses in the field. The person who found him informed Sa’d, “The Prophet (ﷺ) wanted me to look for you — whether you have passed on or whether you are alive.” Sa’d replied, “I am among those who are dying, relay my peace and greetings to the Apostle and say to him, ‘Sa’d ibn al-Rabi’ says to you: May Allah reward you the best reward a prophet receives for serving his people.’ And relay my greetings of peace to your people [the Anṣār] and tell them that Sa’d says no society has an excuse if its prophet is harmed while you are alive.”<sup>260</sup>

The Prophet (ﷺ) himself went out looking for Ḥamzah, his uncle. He found his body, with his stomach split open and liver mutilated, midway in the valley. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), overcome with grief at the macabre sight, expressed his most internal thoughts,

*If Ṣafīyah [Ḥamzah’s sister and the Prophet’s aunt] would not grieve, and if some people in future generations thought it would be binding on them, I would leave him [his corpse] to be transferred into the bellies of beasts and the beaks of birds. If Allah gives me a time of predominance over Quraysh at any one location I will take apart thirty of them.”<sup>261</sup>*

When the Muslims saw how moved and sad the Prophet (ﷺ) was, they said, “By Allah, if we one day have the upper hand we will disfigure them in unprecedented ways.” It was in response to the expression of human tendencies in war that the words of Allah (ﷻ) tamed these inclinations,

**Hence, if you return punishment, respond only to the extent of the torture leveled against you; but to bear yourselves with patience is indeed far better for [you, since Allah is with] those who are patient in adversity. Endure, then, with patience [all that they who deny the truth may say] — always remembering that it is none but Allah who gives you the strength to endure adversity — and do not grieve over them, and neither be distressed by false arguments which they devise... 16:126–127.**

Coming through this extremely painful experience the Prophet (ﷺ), even though his human nature had the propensity to feel like all other human beings, banned any mutilation of the human body. He then covered Ḥamzaḥ’s body with a garment, and offered funeral prayers for his departing soul. He further ordered that all the other Muslim fatalities be placed one by one next to Ḥamzaḥ. He offered all of them individual requiems (*rak’ahs*) that totaled around 72, the number of Muslims fatalities at Uḥud. Of all the martyrs, he singled out Muṣ’ab ibn ‘Umayr for whom no shroud could be found that was large enough to cover his whole body, “*May Allah grant you His mercy. I saw you in Makkah when there was no one more sensitive and no one more stunningly [handsome] than you. And now you are in a coarse garment.*”<sup>262</sup>

When Ṣafiyah bint ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib heard that her brother, Ḥamzaḥ, was killed and mutilated, she was patient with the outcome, despite its obvious morbidity, “We find ourselves content with what happened. I will surely look forward to Allah’s recompense for this sacrifice and with Allah’s will I shall be as patient as possible.” Some Muslims wanted to carry the bodies of their relatives who were killed at Uḥud back to Madinah in order to bury

them there. The Prophet (ﷺ) barred them from doing so, “Bury them at the place where they were killed.” Then the Prophet (ﷺ) stood at that burial place and said, “I will bear witness to [the glory of] these fallen individuals. Anyone injured for Allah shall be resurrected on the Day of Judgment; his wound will bleed, the color will be the color of blood and the scent will be the scent of musk.”<sup>263</sup> After the burials and the *du‘ā’s*, he and his companions-in-arms returned to Madinah on the 15th day of Shawwāl.

### Systemic Oppression and the Martyrdom of Ḥamzaḥ

There are a some more details of this war that deserve close attention. The first one has to do with the martyrdom of Ḥamzaḥ, the Prophet’s (ﷺ) uncle. He was killed by a slave called Waḥshī, who was owned by Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im. Jubayr made a promise to Waḥshī, “If you kill Muhammad we will give you all of the best horses we have; if you kill ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib we will give you 100 of our select camels; and if you kill Ḥamzaḥ we will set you free.” It is said that Waḥshī figured it was impossible to get to Muhammad (ﷺ) because of security. As for ‘Alī he had a reputation of defeating everyone who ever tried to take him on. And as for Ḥamzaḥ, even though he was known to be heroic, it would be the best chance Waḥshī would have.

History books tell us that Waḥshī was an African from Abyssinia, who was skilled with the spear. When the two opposing armies met, Waḥshī set out to “hunt down” Ḥamzaḥ. Upon locating him in the middle of a clutch of *mushriks*, Waḥshī began to move toward Ḥamzaḥ, as discreetly and stealthily as he could. When Waḥshī was in throwing range of Ḥamzaḥ, he could see Ḥamzaḥ fighting gallantly with his sword. Waḥshī described what followed, “I looked for my target, positioned my spear, and then threw it at Ḥamzaḥ. It penetrated his lower abdomen and exited from between his legs. He limped as he came toward me and then fell. Then I left him in that condition until he died. I returned to him [after he was dead]; I took my spear and went back to join the troops. And there I remained without further combat activity because I had no need for it: I had gained my freedom!”<sup>264</sup>

This may have been an isolated incident in which being a slave, being black, and being oppressed combined in a man's life to produce a willingness to do anything to gain freedom. It may also be larger than an irregular incident in which a psychology and an establishment are at work to fight against liberating forces. No one doubts the details of this event, but very few are willing to examine it critically. Can we not extrapolate this to the condition of millions of Waḥshīs who are living in economic bondage, political oppression, and racial discrimination, and who yearn for freedom? Can we not also infer that there are influential individuals who are willing to unleash the pent-up feelings of their enslaved populations for wars against forces fighting for liberation and equality? So why did Waḥshī not join the Muslims? Had he done so, he would have been a free man without having to kill another freedom-fighter. Did he have that option? Or was slavery so severe in those days that accurate information was withheld from slaves, and they were left to the misinformation of their masters and slave-owners? Are the slaves of today's world to repeat the Waḥshī act? Or can they see beyond the lies and distortions of the established system?

Another detail also merits closer scrutiny. The *mushrik* women led by Hind bint 'Utbaḥ, the wife of Abū Sufyān and the mother of Mu'āwiyah, went out to the body-riddled battleground and mutilated the corpses of the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions. They cut off the martyred Muslims' ears and smashed their noses. Hind "decorated" her body with the ears and noses of the slain Muslims, wearing the body parts like jewelry. She gave her real jewelry, bracelets, and anklets to Waḥshī. Hind even ripped open Ḥamzah's abdomen, took out his liver, and chewed on it. She could not swallow it so she spit it out!<sup>265</sup> This barbaric act was committed by a person who was viscerally and instinctively opposed to Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), the Qur'an, and Islam. The question here is: did Hind ever offer any sincere atonement to make amends for such behavior? None that is recorded in Islamic history books. When the Prophet (ﷺ) stood beside Ḥamzah's son after the battle he was extremely moved. He said, "I will never suffer an infliction like this; I have never been in a position where I feel as aggrieved and appalled as I do now."<sup>266</sup>

Of course, later on, after the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away, the family of Abū Sufyān made it back into the limelight, never acceding to the demands of the just exercise of power, and history took a sharp turn away from the Prophet’s (ﷺ) course with the Umayyad regime of inherited power.

### How the Muslims Got Stronger in the Aftermath of Uḥud

Most historians consider the results of Uḥud to be a victory for the *mushriks* against the Muslims, although the strict military facts may not justify such a conclusion. It is true that the *mushriks* seemed to have the upper hand militarily, which would have made it possible for them to finish off the Muslims once and for all. The Muslims were surrounded on almost every side, and the *mushriks* had a distinct military superiority over the Muslims by any measure. And yet the Prophet (ﷺ) was able to marshal the Muslim forces, fight back and actually save nine-tenths of his military force from what had seemed like inevitable annihilation.

In fact, Uḥud turned out to have many benefits for the Muslims. The *mushriks*’ inability to inflict a decisive defeat on the Islamic forces after besieging them with their better-equipped forces was an anticlimax for the *mushriks*, while the Islamic forces’ success in breaking out of a military blockade with minimal losses meant the battle ended positively for the Muslims. Not only did the Muslim forces avoid outright defeat, they were also able to identify “Muslims” whose commitment was dubious at best — the *munāfiqs*. This meant that after Uḥud the Muslims were able to return to Madinah and weed out of their decision-making circle those who had discredited themselves at this crucial juncture.

The dereliction of duty by the Muslim archers followed the desertion from the Muslim army of one-third of its armed forces, led by ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, on the way to Uḥud. The desertion of such a large number of fighting men, and the lack of discipline demonstrated by the all-important marksmen during the battle, were very vivid examples of how weak the popular attachment to its leadership can be, even when the commander is a stellar and impeccable

personality like the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. Nevertheless, the Prophet's (ﷺ) commanding position led the Muslims out of this potential catastrophe. One can virtually hear some of them reflecting on the battle as quoted in this Qur'an, **"Did we have any power of decision in this matter [the Uḥud reversals]? And if we had any power of decision, we would not have left so many dead behind!" (3:154).**

The strugglers in the way of Allah (ﷻ) should realize what they can learn through this difficult military and civilian lesson. In the first instance, they learn that not all Muslim soldiers are of the same levels of commitment, obedience, and courage. Some hundreds turned back on the way to Uḥud, and others abandoned the military positions they were ordered to hold by Muhammad (ﷺ). It must be understood that not only were these defections severe military blows to the Islamic armed forces, but they were equally the psychological desertion of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). This is no small lesson. There were *shahīds* who paid with their lives so that the survivors of this war could assess personalities ('Abdullāh ibn Ubayy), assess power factions (the 300 deserters), and assess those who were inclined to leave their military positions for the spoils of war more than they were inclined to obey their commander-in-chief.

The war at Uḥud offered the men around the Prophet (ﷺ) the ability to apply the knowledge they had gained from the Qur'an, from their experiences with Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), from their well-intentioned common sense, and from their own personal insight, to all of this war's harsh details, which were recorded in the annals of scriptural history. War is definitely a test, difficult and painful, and the Muslims experienced nothing that the *mushriks* did not also experience at the same time, while engaging the Muslims in battle. Uḥud brought the Muslims face-to-face with death. It gave them the opportunity to gauge whether they were really prepared to die for Allah's (ﷻ) cause, or whether thinking about death — which they did much of before going out to the front — forced them to be honest with themselves about any other reasons pertaining to why they were really going to fight. For most people, death is a finality; thoughts of impending death lead them to come to terms with their



motivations, to focus on what is important, and to “get their affairs in order.” It is next to impossible for one to cheat himself at the moment of this kind of reflection; there will not be a second chance. In this case, at the Battle of Uḥud, Allah (ﷻ) organized a theater of war that was the great truth-teller: in the end all the Muslims knew why each of their brothers, and why each unto himself, went to war.

In a strictly military sense, Uḥud was a limited victory for the *mushriks*. In the broader strategic picture, however, it was a defeat for them. By the end of the episode as a whole, there is no doubt that the Muslims emerged stronger, despite all the problems they had experienced. In other words, the *mushriks* may have won the battle, but they were still losing the war. The Islamic State was emerging with more power than ever.

This was confirmed by a military maneuver executed by the Prophet (ﷺ) on the day after he and his force returned to Madinah from Uḥud, with the object of demonstrating to the *mushriks*, the Arabian nomads, the *munāfiqs*, and the Yahūd that the Muslim bloc was still a military force to be reckoned with. The setback at Uḥud had not deflated their high spirits; it might have been a bitter pill to swallow, but the immune system of the Muslim fighting body was still as strong as ever, if not more so.

On the 16th of Shawwāl, a public proclamation pertaining to pursuing the *mushriks* was made by the Prophet (ﷺ), “Only those who fought on at Uḥud should join us in this military campaign.”<sup>267</sup> Those who did not go to Uḥud should not take part in this operation. Once the force was assembled, the Prophet (ﷺ) led his companions to a place called Ḥamrā’ al-Asad, about eight miles from Madinah, where they camped.

The *mushriks*, meanwhile, had camped at a place called al-Rawḥah, about two days’ distance from Madinah. Instead of going all the way back to Makkah, they had decided to return to Madinah and finish off the remaining Muslims. As the developments began to escalate toward another confrontation, the Prophet (ﷺ) dispatched Ma’bad ibn Abī Ma’bad, who had recently become a Muslim, from Khuzā‘ah — a tribe on good terms with the Muslims

— to catch up with Abū Sufyān and spread information that would lower the *mushrik* morale. Abū Sufyān, who was not aware that this man had become a Muslim, asked him, “What news do you have?” Ma’bad answered, “Muhammad and his people are in a war rage against you. They have put together an unprecedented force in pursuit of you. Many people who did not make it to Uḥud felt guilty and now they all want to fight!” Abū Sufyān asked him, “So what do you say about this development?” He said, “I advise you to leave [for Makkah] once the army is assembled.” Abū Sufyān responded “We had decided to attack and root out the Muslims.” Ma’bad then said, “Do not think of that; I advise you.” After hearing this testimony the *mushriks* decided against going back and fighting the militant Muslims again. They decided instead to continue their journey to Makkah.<sup>268</sup>

But Abū Sufyān, wanting to intimidate the Muslims, sent a messenger to tell them that Quraysh was preparing to make a comeback and to exterminate the Islamic power base. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*Our reference is Allah and He is the best source to rely upon.*” The Muslims maintained their battle camp at this position for three days before returning to Madinah. By showing Quraysh that the Muslims had not been vanquished and were ready to fight again, forcing Quraysh to retreat to Makkah despite their apparent success at Uḥud, the military expedition known as Ghazwaḥ Ḥamrā’ al-Asad served its purpose.<sup>269</sup>

The Qur’an builds Muslims by practice, experience, and the real issues of life. That was the case in Makkah, and it was the case in Madinah. Muslims built their power base by experiencing both victories and setbacks, by going through triumphs and defeat. These words of Allah (ﷻ) were available on all such human occasions to add layers of maturity to the growing Islamic power presence. In a sense, these *āyāt* became the blood, bones, nerves, and nucleus of this growing and expanding reality. Allah (ﷻ) said to the evolving Muslims at Uḥud,

**It is not Allah’s will [O you who deny His power] to  
abandon the committed Muslims to your way of life;**

**[and] to that end He will distinguish the vile from the virtuous. And it is not Allah's will to give you insight into that which is beyond the reach of human perception (3:179).**

When Allah's (ﷻ) words on two different battlegrounds are compared, there is a noticeable difference. When He speaks here to Muslims who were in the aftermath of a battle that turned against them, He speaks mildly and gently, as is the case in the *āyah* above. Contrast this tone with His words to the Muslims when they were flushed with victory at Badr,

**You may desire the fleeting gains of this world, but Allah desires [for you the good of] the life to come: and Allah is Almighty, Wise. Had it not been for a decree from Allah that had already gone forth, there would indeed have befallen you a tremendous chastisement on account of all [the captives] you took (8:67).**

The words in this loving Qur'an are crafted with care; they do not speak to Muslims making mistakes when they are victorious (Badr) in the same manner that they speak to Muslims making mistakes when they are vanquished (Uḥud). These are the gentle Qur'anic words addressed to the bleeding and depleted Muslims at Uḥud,

**There were among you such as cared for this world [alone], just as there were among you such as cared for the life to come; whereupon, in order that He might put you to a test, He prevented you from defeating your foes. But now He has effaced your sin: for Allah is limitless in His bounty to those who are committed to Him [and His expression of power] (3:152).**

The broader context of these historical events is important to remember. With the rise of an Islamic scriptural society in Madinah, the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, with its numerous deities,

multiple gods, and many other earthly authorities, took up a position of extreme hostility to the worldly embodiment of Islamic principles being realized in Madinah. The contrasting events of Badr and Uḥud contributed to the mindset of Arabian *mushriks* and their threatened power factions. At Badr they were roundly defeated, and at Uḥud they failed to be decisively victorious, seeing the Muslims turn near-defeat to their advantage. As a result, their anger against Muhammad (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims was so much aroused that they were willing to set aside their own cultural norms and historical traditions, and take Islam on with no regard to moral limits of any kind.

One incident in particular demonstrates how vicious the *mushriks* became. After the Prophet (ﷺ) returned to Madinah from Uḥud, a delegation from two clans, ‘Uḍal and al-Qārraḥ, came to him. They said, “O Messenger of Allah! There are people among us who are yielding to Allah [that is, they are becoming Muslims]. Send with us a corps of your companions who will teach us about this *dīn*, who will recite to us the Qur’an, and who will instruct us about the laws of Islam.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) sent with them seven of his companions: Marthad ibn Abī Marthad, Khālīd ibn Abī al-Bakīr, Mi‘tab ibn ‘Ubayd, ‘Āṣim ibn Thābit, Khubayb ibn ‘Adī, Zayd ibn al-Dathnaḥ, and ‘Abdullāh ibn Ṭāriq. Marthad ibn Abī Marthad was their *amīr*. They travelled until they reached a place called Mā’ al-Rajī’, located between ‘Asafān and Makkah, in an area inhabited by Hudhayl. When these emissaries of Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) reached this area, they were betrayed by the nomadic Arabians of ‘Uḍal and al-Qārraḥ. These beleaguered Muslims turned to Hudhayl for help, but Hudhayl’s strongman, Sufyān ibn Khālīd, had been killed by the Muslims in the aftermath of Uḥud, after he had assembled a force to attack Madinah.

So these emissaries of the Prophet (ﷺ) found themselves surrounded by hostile swordsmen from all directions. They, too, brandished their swords in self-defense. The Hudhaylī men said, “By Allah! We do not seek to kill you. What we want from you is money that you have taken from the Makkans. If you give us the

money you will have our word, and Allah is our witness, that we will not harm you.” Four of the Muslims said they could never accept such promises from *mushriks*, and fought until they were killed. The other three were taken prisoner; Hudhayl took them to Makkah to sell them there, which would have meant imminent death for them. On the way to Makkah, ‘Abdullāh ibn Tāriq managed to free a hand, take a sword, and fight. His captors responded by throwing rocks at him until they killed him.

Khubayb and Zayd were taken to Makkah, where they were sold. Zayd was bought by Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah, who wanted to take revenge on him because of the death of his father, Umayyah ibn Khalaf. He was taken out of Makkah to be killed. Many individuals from Quraysh came and surrounded him. Abū Sufyān asked him moments before he was executed, “By Allah, would you not wish that Muhammad was with us now instead of you? We would lop off his head instead of yours! And you could be back home with your family.” Zayd retorted, “By Allah! Wherever Muhammad is, I do not wish that he suffers even a prick of injury, while I am with my family.” Abū Sufyān then said to the people around him, “I have not seen people adoring others as much as Muhammad’s companions adore him.”<sup>270</sup> Zayd was then killed.

Khubayb was then taken to the same place, but this time to be crucified. He asked his captors to give him a chance to pray two *rak‘ahs*. After meticulously performing his *ṣalāh*, he turned to face his tormentors, who fixed him to a cross and raised him. He turned his face skyward and said, “O Allah! We communicated the message of Your Prophet. Tell him what is being done to us. O Allah! Tally their numbers, destroy their numbers, and make no exception!”<sup>271</sup>

It should be stated for the record that the Muslims never treated non-Muslim prisoners of war the way Muslim prisoners of war have been treated by the *mushriks*, then and now.

Confirmation of the expanding power presence of the Islamic State in Madinah, despite the apparent setback at Uḥud, came at Badr in the month of Dhū al-Qa‘dah in the fourth year after the Hijrah. When Abū Sufyān and ‘Umar had exchanged words after Uḥud, it had been agreed that in the following year, this would be

the time and place for a military showdown between the Muslims and the *mushriks*. In honoring his commitment, the Prophet (ﷺ) went to Badr with 1,500 companions-in-arms and waited eight days for Abū Sufyān to arrive. Abū Sufyān, who initially intended to square off against the battle-hardened Muslims at Badr, had left Makkah with a fighting force, but by the time he reached al-Ẓahrān, he had begun to have second thoughts. He soft-pedalled his intention for retreat by saying to his men, “O people of Quraysh! The best thing for you is a fertile and productive year, with plenty of produce and dairy. This is a callous and sapless year [because they had spent the entire year in war preparations for Uḥud, as opposed to tending to their profit-oriented commercial interests]. I will be returning [to Makkah]; you, too, may wish to return.” And so they turned about and returned to Makkah without confronting the Muslims in battle, as they had previously agreed to do. When the Prophet (ﷺ) ascertained that Abū Sufyān had returned to Makkah, he and his companions returned to Madinah. This was a significant moral victory against the Makkan *mushriks*. The Muslims, in the public mind, had gained a warrior reputation throughout Arabia despite suffering a failure of sorts at Uḥud.<sup>272</sup>

The climate of war at Uḥud makes it easier to understand the pertinent meanings of these practical *āyāt* in context. At the beginning of this lesson, notice that Allah (ﷻ) highlights the solidarity and collective morale of the tenacious fighters, who stood their ground when the battle was turning against them. At the same time, these *āyāt* relocate the example of these fighting Muslims into a larger context. No Muslims should ever think the world begins and ends in the theater of war; if they are doing Allah’s (ﷻ) will on earth, they have to understand they are flowing with a historical determinant that is contingent upon how much and how far they are obedient and loving of Allah (ﷻ).

Some of these *āyāt* were a solace to the resisting Muslims who were not able to score a decisive victory. What was being suggested, in effect, was that even though the Muslims lost this round because of their own mistakes, they could overcome these mistakes firstly by understanding why and who committed them, and sec-

ondly by realizing that the fighting spirit should never succumb to the mistakes of a few, a situation that may recur in the future. Sometimes Muslims are tempted to give up just because they cannot be perfect, or just because the results were not according to their expectations. This could never be the right attitude if the meanings of this divine Scripture are fully understood, and incorporated into our lives.

Allah (ﷻ) says in these *āyāt* that the *mu’mins* are superior to the *non-mu’mins*. If the conditions of appraisal were frozen in the minutes following Uḥud, it would not seem that way; but with a broader approach, seeing Uḥud as just one part of an all-encompassing historical continuum, the fact of the superiority of the *mu’mins* is confirmed by the remaining years of the *Siraḥ* of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) as he went on from one military victory to the next until the liberation of Makkah. It is also the case that subsequent generations of Muslims carried this message and intent to the four corners of the world after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ).

That fortunes in battle are cyclical, meaning wins come after losses, describes a reality in which social laws are at work. These social laws (*sunan*) are Allah’s (ﷻ) laws of involvement in human, societal, and individual life activities. If Muslims lose in a particular military campaign, it is because their human failings led them to contravene divine guidance. Cyclical military outcomes are also a way of differentiating between those who are totally committed to the Islamic cause, and those whose loyalties are diluted by commitments to other identities and causes. If Muslims were never to face challenges in war or in life, how could anyone differentiate a true Muslim from a *munāfiq* “Muslim”? And that is where Allah (ﷻ) says,

**Allah has the power to will anything. All what befell you on that day when the two hosts met in battle happened by Allah’s leave, so that He might mark out the [true] believers and those who were tainted with hypocrisy who, when they were told, “Come, fight in Allah’s cause” or “Defend yourselves,” answered, “If**

**we but knew [that it would come to a] fight, we would indeed follow you” (3:165–166).**

It is necessary to be mindful of the vast distance between the meanings of this nurturing Book and the mindset of today’s war-weary and status quo “Muslims.” Note the following *āyah*,

**Do you think that you could enter paradise unless Allah is cognizant of your hard struggle [for His cause], and is cognizant of your patience in adversity? (3:142).**

Here Allah (ﷻ) — not the *faqīhs* or the ‘alims — is making the Muslim access to paradise contingent upon their struggle, their energetic attempt to achieve His objectives, and their strenuous effort in pursuit of a well-defined program, which may, according to the prophetic model, involve an open clash between two opposing sides. This is what will take the Muslims to the gardens of bliss in the hereafter. Compare this with today’s prevailing current of thought among many Muslims. The secular and “religious” influence on this mindset is so significant that instead of being measured in terms of struggle, the Muslim privilege to paradise is assessed in terms of units of prayer and days of fasting. Allah (ﷻ) could easily have put it this way if that was what He wanted the Muslims to concentrate on; but nowhere does He suggest that we can expect to enter paradise only on the strength of our meticulous prayers, our day-long fasts, and our doing Him the honor of praying to Him.

The return of these Muslims from this alien understanding of Islam and commitment, which is commonplace today, to the actual standard of conduct as laid out in the Qur’an will not be achieved simply by explaining it on a piece of paper, or lecturing about it in the auditoriums of universities, or even from the *minbars* in the *masjids*. It requires sincerely committed Muslim communities and societies to grasp the fact that the confrontation of *ẓulm*, oppression, and aggression is as much a part of Islam as performing five prayers a day, and will not be achieved simply by praying and fast-



ing. The best prayers ever performed by any human being were the prayers of Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ), and even his prayers alone were not enough to roll back tyranny, subjugation, and inequality. He had to go to Badr, he had to go to Uḥud, he had to struggle, he had to fight, he had to lay his life on the line, and he had to suffer setbacks and disappointments, before seeing signs of success. There is no other way. The forces of enslavement, despotism, and greed are real and powerful, and they have to be confronted with the just exercise of power by Muslims. The reality of life has been presented in theory and practice by Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ); so why do Muslims turn away from it, abdicate their responsibilities, absent themselves from the struggle, or even turn renegade by joining the forces of those who fight against Islam?

Do not forget that these *āyāt* were a direct response to the way human beings felt, thought, acted, and reacted to psychological, social, and human stimuli in the crucible of history at the time. Take *āyah* 3:143, as an example. It is reported that many companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) felt unrighteous and dishonored for not being able to participate in the Battle of Badr and thereby be rewarded with the prestige of fighting there. Some of them would say, “I wish I was martyred like those who were killed at Badr.” They yearned for an opportunity to redeem their feelings of deficiency and inadequacy. They developed an insatiable desire for the opportunity to take on the *mushriks*, and achieve by that means either martyrdom and blissful gardens, or a life of honor and prestige. Then came the opportunity of Uḥud. And only some of these who had proclaimed their readiness for battle proved themselves to be true to their selves, society, and Allah (ﷻ), **“For, indeed, you did yearn for death [at the battleground for Allah’s cause] before you came face to face with it [at Uḥud]; and now you have seen it with your own eyes.”**

### The Death of Prophets Should Not Deter Muslims from Duty

Āyah 3:144 addresses another all too real human situation in the context of the Battle of Uḥud. When the Muslims were constrained to fight on two fronts because the bowmen abandoned their positions, the Muslims naturally became scattered all over the battlefield. One climbed the mountain of Uḥud and heard the Yahūd saying that “Muhammad is killed.” This person said, “If someone says Muhammad was killed, I will behead him.” Such a mentality, which refuses to accept the mortality of a human, even if that human happens to be Allah’s Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), is brought into the right state of mind with these inspirational words, **“And Muhammad is only an apostle who was preceded by [other] apostles [who also passed away] before him...” (3:144).**

The same *āyah* was also a response to other Muslims’ different reactions to the same situation. When the rumor that the Prophet (ﷺ) had been killed was disseminated over the whole battlefield, the Muslims responded in different ways. Some lost heart, saying, “...but if he was a prophet he would not have been killed.” But others, with a better grip on reality and a closer attachment to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), said, “And if that is the case we too should fight and die as he did until Allah provides victory or until we join His Prophet.” Hence the divine reminder, **“And Muhammad is only an apostle...”**

It appears that the rumor pertaining to the Messenger’s (ﷺ) apparent death in the battle of Uḥud began when the Prophet (ﷺ) was struck on the head and injured. Ibn Qami’ah went to the *mushriks*’ base area and claimed that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed. This rumor spread like fire in a haystack. But the clear message of this *āyah* is that, even if Muhammad (ﷺ) did die at the battlefield, that should not have dented the determination of the combatant Muslims to fight on until Allah (ﷻ) had decided the outcome. Before Muhammad, Mūsá and Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) had died. Zakariyā and Yaḥyá (ﷺ) were killed. We humans are expected to expire according to what Allah (ﷻ) has decreed. Though we may not know the place and the time we go to our Maker, we know nevertheless that death will overtake us sooner or later. And none of

this should have any negative effects on our attachment to Allah (ﷻ) even if it were to happen, of all places, at the hands of the enemies of Islam on the field of battle.

Do people really think that achieving a place in Allah’s (ﷻ) garden of bliss is going to be easy? Does anyone in his right mind think that he can turn away from struggles in this life, and achieve a place in the Garden of Eden just by uttering pious words and stimulating the imagination? The channels to *Jannah* are struggle and patience in affliction. On these parallel routes through life that lead to paradise are the people of jihad and the people of patience. An echo of this resounds in Allah’s (ﷻ) words from another *sūrah*,

**Do men think that on their [mere] saying, “We have attained to faith,” they will be left to themselves, and will not be put to a trial? Yes, indeed, We did try those who lived before them; and so, [too, shall be tried the people now living]; certainly Allah will mark out those who prove themselves true... (29:2–3).**

All this falls under the broad definition of jihad (endeavor and exertion leading to armed struggle). Jihad, in a limited sense of the word, includes personal struggles against selfish inclinations, and vices and sins of every kind, from material greed to carnal desires to negative emotions such as hatred, jealousy, and rage. All these have to be battled by humans throughout their lives, and often most significantly during the years of adolescence, as our minds and bodies make the transition from childhood to adulthood, from immaturity to maturity. Many Muslims now tend to restrict their understanding of jihad to this personal sphere. But equally important is the collective jihad of individuals, communities, and societies against usurious bureaucracies, political corruption, and military aggression. This type of jihad demands the exertion of human resources in an organized manner, under the leadership of one who commands the loyalty of the rank and file. It is more difficult and complicated in that it is not personal and that it requires work to produce the coordinated results characteristic of the joint effort of many people. Also, it is

liable to meet external opposition of the worst kind from powerful enemies; but that does not mean it can be set aside and excluded from this definition of jihad in its fullest sense.

After quoting the *āyah*, “...if, then, he [Muhammad] dies or is killed, will you turn about on your heels?” Imam ‘Alī said, during the lifetime of Muhammad (ﷺ),

By Allah! We will not retreat from our positions after Allah has guided us. By Allah! If he dies or is killed, I will fight as he fought until I die. By Allah! I am his brother, his deputy, his cousin, and his heir. Who is there who is more entitled to him than me?<sup>273</sup>

The fact of death is something we all face; it is not a sign that Allah (ﷻ) has abandoned or forgotten us. Everyone dies on Allah’s (ﷻ) watch, so to speak. Some people go through the most dangerous experiences but do not die; other people think they may have secured for themselves the safest, most secure, and healthy circumstances, and yet they still die. Everyone’s lifespan is determined by Allah (ﷻ). A courageous warrior who spends his life on the battlefield may die peacefully of old age in his bed; a coward who remains far from any danger or risk may die young. This is another one of those divine realities that many people prefer to ignore or turn a blind eye to, but Allah (ﷻ) emphasizes it repeatedly in His Book,

**He it is who has created you out of clay, and then has decreed a term [for you] — a term known [only] to Him (6:2).**

**But when the end of their [life] term approaches, they can neither delay it by a single moment, nor can they hasten it (16:61).**

**...and none that is long-lived has his days lengthened, and neither is any lessened of his days, unless it be**

**thus laid down in [Allah’s] decree: for, behold, all this is easy for Allah (35:11).**

The issue of death is central to those who do not want to go to war. For most, their reasoning is simple: they do not want to die. Others object to war because they do not want to kill. War may be described as the clash of two or more fighting forces representing blocs that have very strong opinions, policies, interests, or principles, which each considers vital to its society for some reason or another. It is granted there will be casualties and fatalities as a result. In the end the question comes to the choice of which is regarded as more important and precious: the human lives of individuals, or the scriptural principles entrusted to man that govern human life more broadly, in communities, and societies? The possible answers to this question often determine the person’s perception of war, although in many cases, particularly where interests rather than principles are concerned, wars are more acceptable to those whose own lives are not at risk, be they political leaders or social elites. However this issue is raised, one fact is indisputable: death cannot be avoided. If avoiding war altogether were a way to immortality, the terms of the argument would be very different; but the observable fact of life is, as the Qur’an so often reiterates, that every human being is going to die — sooner or later.

What is more, human lifetimes are limited. No one lives a thousand or a million years; and even if he did, that is still a short period compared to eternity. A lifetime of 70 to 100 years in this world is minuscule on the scale of time — a fleeting moment that ends with the inevitability of death. There are, of course, millions of vital factors that make life possible in this world, but these are linked by a divine consistency that defines and holds together the life of an individual. Allah (ﷻ) is the one who made it possible for man to live. Almost everything man knows of in this reality has been designed to facilitate his potential to live in it: the tiniest atom and the largest galaxy have been fine-tuned to accommodate human life. It is within these divine physical laws that support human life, and divine social laws that promote the quality of life,

that a person's individual life is located, and he cannot do anything significant to change these dynamics. It is Allah (ﷻ) who gives life and determines its duration; and it is Allah (ﷻ) who takes away life and terminates its continuation. This is equally true in times of "peace" and in times of "war."

Of course, these are issues that many people do not think about, because they do not grasp the meanings of this noble Qur'an. As a result, there are people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, who are brave and defy death, and may live a long or a short life regardless; and at the same time there are human beings who are cowards and are afraid to die, and they too may live a short or a long life regardless. One of the less appreciated realities is that courage or cowardice neither decrease, nor increase, the lifespan Allah (ﷻ) has decreed for a human when he was born. But once this is understood, cowardice and timidity can never be used as a rationale for avoiding war when circumstances make it necessary to fight those who threaten man's ability to live, individually and collectively, in accordance with the laws and principles of Allah (ﷻ).

It appears from absorbing the meanings of these *āyāt* that people are generally of two inclinations: there is the type that is very concerned with trying to live a few more hours or a few more years, and the type who wants to expedite the transition to Allah (ﷻ) by a few hours or a few years. The first type is world-centered and the second type is God-centered. Allah (ﷻ) describes these contrasting characteristics in other *āyāt*,

Unto him who cares for [no more than the enjoyment of] this fleeting life We readily grant thereof as much as We please, [giving] to whomever it is Our will [to give]; but in the end We consign him to [the suffering of] Hell, which he will have to endure disgraced and disowned! But as for those who care for the [good of the] life to come, and strive for it as it ought to be striven for, and are [true] *mu'mins* withal, they are the ones whose striving finds favor [with Allah]! (17:18–19). ﷻ

To him who desires a harvest in the life to come, We shall grant an increase in his harvest; whereas to him who desires [but] a harvest in this world, We [may] give something thereof, but he will have no share in [the blessings of] the life to come (42:20).

This is as applicable to the hard core materialists who are utterly bullheaded about their uncompromising commitment for the lusts and desires of worldly life as it is to Muslims who would disobey Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) as an act of “human failure,” for example when the archers at Uḥud abandoned their military positions in order to chase after the spoils of war.

The key lessons of *āyāt* 3:142–148 may thus be summarized in the following list of eight points,

1. Access to *Jannah* is contingent on adopting the outlook and conduct of a *mujāhid* — one who truly endures the pains of struggle and agonies of warfare, and one who is willing to sacrifice his time and ultimately his life, for the sake of Allah (ﷻ).
2. Gaining the status of *shahādah* for Allah’s (ﷻ) cause cannot be obtained by wishful thinking and fancy expectations. It is gained by patience, consistency, and uncompromising struggle. Along this path Muslims never wish they are killed by the *kāfirs*; rather they aspire to surrender their lives to Allah (ﷻ) while struggling for His cause.
3. Prophets and apostles (ﷺ) will not live forever in their respective societies. The most important objective is to hold firm to Allah’s (ﷻ) message even when His messenger dies, either by an act of war or by an act of nature.<sup>274</sup>
4. What happens to men in life, both during the time of their prophet and for the rest of time, is intended to test man. People of divine commitment may be tested by hard times and people who are prone to temptation may be tested with the riches of life. There is no fixed method for testing humans.
5. Everyone will die when their allotted time in this world expires. The “cause of death” may be found in the maelstrom of war, or in the quietness of peace, but death is inevitable for

all, even Apostles of Allah (ﷺ), and there is no sense in trying to avoid or postpone it, especially when that involves ignoring the call of scriptural duty.

6. Those who are infatuated with this world, generally speaking, will get a share of it; and those who are in love with Allah (ﷻ) and the eternal life will have a share of the world to come.
7. Jihad and fighting for Allah's (ﷻ) cause are not peculiar to the Islamic Ummah; it was also the *modus operandi* of previous scriptural subjects of Allah (ﷻ). Many "Christians" and "Jews" who yielded to Allah (ﷻ) struggled and even fought on the basis of divine guidance, which they received via their prophets and apostles (ﷺ). They, too, either were victorious and defeated their enemies, or they became martyrs and passed on to the rewards of the hereafter.
8. *Du'ā's* (prayers and supplication) are pronounced during and after the struggle; they are not meaningless words that sooth a lagging conscience, uttered by some to compensate for their failures and ineptitude. Such humble requests for help (*du'ā'*) are mentioned in this military context with these words, **"O our Sustainer! Forgive us our sins and the lack of moderation in our doings! And make firm our steps, and support us against people who deny You [Your power]!" (3:147).**

Another *du'ā'* attributed to Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) is the following, "O Allah! Forgive me my deviance, my ignorance, my excesses, and that which You know better than I do."<sup>275</sup>

Before closing out this section, one key issue in the Battle of Uhud merits some further explanation. Some of the fighting Muslims were demoralized by reports suggesting the Prophet (ﷺ) had been killed. This was at a stage of the battle when a large contingent of Muslims, reeling from the aftereffects of the archers' disobedience, were retreating after a *mushrik* counter-offensive; and some other Muslims had already disengaged from the battle. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself was in a defensive position, and was wounded. The claim by the enemy that the Prophet (ﷺ) had been killed came as a total shock to the Muslims. Many were so attached to him that



they could not believe he would die while they were still alive. And some of them could not believe he would die when he was needed the most — in the middle of a war that was turning against them. Human nature being what it is, some of the demoralized Muslims literally fled the battlefield. It was in the context of this classically “normal” human behavior that Allah (ﷻ) spoke to them and to all human beings who may find themselves similarly disheartened by the vicissitudes of war or life,

**But Muhammad is only a messenger who was preceded by [other] messengers [who also passed away]; so if he dies or is killed will you retreat and fall back? And whoever does so shall not in the least do harm to Allah [but rather to himself], and Allah will make compensations for those who are thankful (3:144).**

In other words, for all the respect and adulation that you Muslims show for Muhammad (ﷺ), you should not forget that he is only a messenger of Allah (ﷻ). It is Allah (ﷻ) who is All-Powerful and Eternal, not His Messengers (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) sent other messengers who predated Muhammad (ﷺ). They all died when their time came, and so too will Muhammad (ﷺ). As simply as this fact is stated, however, its meanings do not come easily, even to the faithful. The simple fact of death, even when it comes during war, and especially if it claims the most revered and respected commander, such as Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ), could be devastating or beyond understanding.

However, the *āyah* also carries another, related meaning: it highlights the love and adoration the Muslim warriors at Uḥud felt for Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), which contributed to their shock and loss when they heard that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed. These companions of his would have done and given anything and everything to defend, protect, or save Muhammad (ﷺ). Abu Dujānaḥ stood in the midst of the *mushriks*’ onslaught and shielded the Prophet (ﷺ) with his own body, being pierced with spears and lances until he fell dead. There were nine other companions who fought until their deaths to defend him when many of the other Muslims left the bat-

tlefield to retreat into Madinah. The love of the Prophet (ﷺ) in the hearts of that generation, and of the generations that followed, is a matter seldom understood by outsiders. Today, many Muslims are captivated by a tearful and sentimental attachment to him. When the word *Muhammad* is evoked they are overwhelmed by affection, warmheartedness, and a fondness for him, may Allah's (ﷻ) serenity and honor embrace him. Yet this is nothing compared to the feeling his companions had for him. So perhaps, why it was so difficult for them to "let go of him" is all the more understandable when they heard the *mushriks* saying that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed in the battle. In the heat of the moment, in those most difficult and turbulent of circumstances, they could not accept it. Let it be noted here that there is no other figure, in the world or in history, who inspires such deep love among his followers as the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) does among the Muslims. This in part explains the outpouring of anger when he is insulted by opportunists such as Salman Rushdie.<sup>276</sup>

The *āyah* "And Muhammad is only a messenger who was preceded by [other] messengers..." is not of course intended to reduce Muhammad (ﷺ) to the status of an errand boy. He was not simply a mailman delivering a book to people in this world. The status of a messenger of Allah (ﷻ) is the highest honor any human can be granted; but that does not make him more than human. This *āyah* is reminding the reader that the enduring love Muslims have for Muhammad (ﷺ) should not make anyone — including *all* of Allah's Messengers (ﷺ) — lose sight of the facts of life. He had a mission of historical and global significance and that became the responsibility of the Muslims wherever and whenever they are, even if they are in the dead-heat of war.

These *āyāt* were encouraging the distraught Muslims at Uḥud, "Carry on; fight for what Muhammad (ﷺ) is fighting for, do not give up, and see to it that the mission is accomplished." The rumors of his death turned out to be just that — rumors. But the effects they had on the momentum and morale of the Muslims were intentionally recorded here in this eternal Book so that future generations of Muslims would learn not to let such rumors or other

disheartening blows diminish their commitment to Allah’s (ﷻ) cause and their fervor in pursuing it.

**Muslims and Prophets (ﷻ) Engage in Combat against Injustice**  
 The other timely lesson in these words is this,

**And how many a prophet has had to fight [for the sake of Allah], and with him many godly men; and they were not demoralized for all they had to suffer in Allah’s cause, and neither were they weakened; nor did they abase themselves [before the enemy], since Allah loves those who are patient [at times of military stress] (3:146).**

The military setback at Uḥud was the first time the Muslims experienced anything other than triumph in their clashes with the *mushriks*. In the previous all-out encounter between Muslims and *mushriks*, the Muslims scored a resounding victory over their enemies at Badr, even though the Muslim force was only one-third the size of the opposing army. With that precedent in mind, some Muslims evidently expected that triumph would come automatically whenever they took on their adversaries. But then, when they were humbled at Uḥud, they were shocked to realize that being Muslim does not guarantee automatic victory. The lesson was and is a profound one. And this may be the reason why the *āyāt* here are long and the lesson itself is lengthy.

This lesson, hard learnt in the desert of Arabia over 14 centuries ago, goes to the heart of the matter today. These *āyāt* establish the fact, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Allah’s Prophets (ﷻ) had a significant military role. Either they carried arms and actually fought for justice and peace; or they were potentially ready, willing, and able to fight when and if such time came where combat was the only way to resist capitulation or loss of faith.

“And how many a prophet has had to fight [for the sake of Allah] along with many godly men...” These *āyāt* tell us that Mus-

lms did not begin to fight in Arabia during the time of Muhammad (ﷺ); they began fighting long before that, when they were in the company of other prophets such as David, Solomon, Moses, and others (ﷺ). There is a hallowed tradition of bearing arms, confronting aggressive enemies, and dying for the interest of justice and virtue. And this historical fighting spirit was never subdued by innuendo, defamation, or demonization. This fighting spirit lived in the hearts and hands of all humans who made their commitment to Allah (ﷻ). Certainly wars take their toll on peoples and populations. But the principle of the necessity and willingness to fight was never in doubt. People, by binding themselves to Allah (ﷻ) with their hearts and minds, understood there were forces in the world that would violently and viciously oppose Muslims who stand for justice as defined by Allah (ﷻ).

Today those forces take the form of the systemic global alliance of governmental and corporate interests. Along this course there were those who died, there were those who were injured, there were those who were dislocated, and there were those who lost dear ones, but none of these losses deflected the Muslims from the duty to fight for the cause of Allah (ﷻ), which is outlined so carefully and meticulously in these *āyāt*. Anyone who advocates the claim that Islam and the Qur'an can be instituted in society without total and violent opposition from its enemies is living a pipe dream. Neither history nor reality suggest any possibility of evil-mongers abandoning their selfish interests for the purpose of transnational equality, supranational consolidation, trans-racial consensus, the elimination of grinding poverty and its crippling consequences of wealth-concentration as outlined in this Book.

The Muslims of today have to understand these *āyāt* as well as the numerous other *sūrah*s of the Qur'an that make it crystal clear: fighting and military jihad are inevitable not because Muslims are itching for it but because the enemies of Muslims will stop at nothing to defend their interests. Their financial empires require it, their political interference in Muslims' affairs demand it, and their military-industrial complex cannot thrive without it.

“And Allah loves those who are patient [when all the odds seem against them].” The word *patient* here means those who are constant at times of resistance, combat, and military clashes. Many times you will hear Muslims quoting the fact that Allah (ﷻ) loves the *ṣābirūn* (those who are patient); but only rarely will you hear Muslims place that patience in its proper military context.<sup>277</sup>

The history of Allah’s Prophets (ﷺ) is a history of struggle; and those who are attached to these Prophets (ﷺ) are by the same measure those who struggle for the same cause and purpose. Hence, when Muslims nowadays are fighting, they must try to live up to their responsibilities as heirs to that prophetic heritage. True, there are some Muslims who may be too anxious to fight, and there may be Muslims who are ready to fight, and at the same time, there are Muslims who are trapped into fighting. These are the scenarios of real life. Some Muslims — not out of evil intentions nor for reckless purposes — overlook the political and social realities of their countries, the situation of the Muslims around them, and then rush to judgment by taking up arms. This rush-to-arms can be observed in places like Egypt, Syria, and Afghanistan among others. This assessment is not intended to diminish the genuine and overdue duty of resisting such republican dictatorships as exist in these countries. However, the world’s Muslims should be advised that there are different currents of Islamic reassertion in all these places; some of them are working with a true sense of Qur’anic inspiration and awareness of the Sunnah, and thus are beyond this comment. But there are, inevitably, those who want to go to battle against anti-Islamic regimes without first doing the necessary groundwork, based on what is to be understood of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) own methodology.

Let us remind ourselves that Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) went to war after the consolidation of a power base in Madinah in which he was the unrivaled leader, commanding the allegiance of all its citizens. From this power base, he pursued a relentless strategy of liberating Makkah first and foremost, regardless of how long and what effort that took. Today, there are Islamic organizations who are drenched in good intentions but whose planning is not synchronized with the

Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ). Take for example the issue of leadership. During the time when this Qur'an was remaking reality through the efforts of its dedicated first generation, everyone accepted one leadership and one leader: Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ). From there, the social dynamics developed into two distinct blocs: the Muslims and the *mushriks*. And from here forward the tensions mounted until war broke out: at Badr, Uḥud, al-Khandaq, Mu'taḥ, and so on. But in our time, we Muslims are hard pressed to consolidate a leadership, without which we proceed to the necessity of war whenever that may happen. And between having a leadership and the declaration of war, there needs to exist an established power base of committed Muslims who are tied to the Islamic strategy of the Qur'an and Sunnah by their allegiance to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ).

War is not a choice, it is an imposition. And before it breaks out, Muslims are required to have prepared for it by having a leader, consolidating a state, and organizing an armed force that is ready to do combat.

## Victory with Faulty Commitment Is Not Assured

These uplifting words of the sacred Script make it clear that the power centers who are antipathetic to the Muslim power bloc harbor no good feelings or sympathies for the struggling Muslims. This character of theirs may be hidden from the Muslims at other times; but in the aftermath of a military setback suffered by an Islamic armed force their true personality comes into full flower. Some feeble Muslims in such invidious circumstances may begin to entertain the idea of blurring the line between *imān* and *kufr*, between an Islamic state and a nationalist state, or between those who died defending Islamic self-determination and those who killed them. Lest we forget, recall that these early Muslims were now experiencing a new dynamic, which they hitherto were unfamiliar with; how could the *kāfirs* and *mushriks* from Makkah cause such a setback as happened at Uḥud?

And how could all this happen after the confidence boosting impact of the war at Badr? It is this human psychology and nature that the words of Allah (ﷻ) had to treat. It is also at this time of human susceptibility to the *kufr* power structure that Allah (ﷻ) tells us He is with us, that we should not abandon Him, and that He will step into this whole affair with His final word provided we show Him and prove to ourselves that we deserve His support.

The following *āyāt* remind these Muslims, who just came from war, that they should not forget the beginning of the battle at Uḥud when everything was going well because they were tangibly and tenaciously with Allah (ﷻ). But then things began to “go wrong.” And when was that? When they themselves began to show a psychological weakness and a human craving for worldly embellishments: the spoils of war. They proved they were incapable, as a military unit, to adhere to the strict orders of Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ). Lodged deep in the psyche of the Muslim combatant and the Islamic army were the crucial feelings and ideas that eventually resulted in the indecisive conclusion of Uḥud. Allah (ﷻ) wants to show today’s committed Muslims, who are the heirs to that event and the potential re-enactment of it, that He will continue to dwell in the very essence of those who remain loyal and devoted to Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ).

When everything seemed to be going wrong and when the tide of the battle seemed to be turning against Muhammad (ﷺ), Allah (ﷻ) suffused comfort and ease over the hard core Muslims who proved their mettle in the face of the cresting *mushrik* tide. The amazing fact of Uḥud is that the few remaining Muslims fighting with the Prophet (ﷺ) had scaled the heights of confidence when “the world was closing in,” while the “Muslims” in Madinah — the *munāfiqs* who thought they were secure after they broke ranks with the Muslim army on its way to Uḥud — had to stew in an imbroglio of shame and defection. In the final analysis, the Will of Allah (ﷻ) is always at work regardless of how the topical developments take their shape. This whole episode of Uḥud with all its vicissitudes transpired as it did because Allah (ﷻ) was involved on the side of His Prophet (ﷺ) and those who were unwaveringly with him.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنْ تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَرُدُّوكُمْ  
عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ بَلِ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَهُوَ  
خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا  
أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ  
وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ  
وَعَدَهُ إِذْ تَحْسُونَهُمْ بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَّعْتُمْ  
فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّا بَعَدَ مَا أَرْنَاكُمْ مَا تَحْبُونَ ۗ مِنْكُمْ  
مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ۗ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمُ  
عَنْهُمْ لِبْتَلِيكُمْ ۗ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَىٰ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ ۞ إِذْ تَصْعَدُونَ وَلَا تَكُونُونَ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ  
وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أَخْرَابِكُمْ فَأَتَيْتُكُمُ غَمًّا بَغِيًّا  
لِيَكِيلًا تَحْزَنُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ ۗ  
وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً  
نُعَاسًا يَغْشَىٰ طَآئِفَةً مِّنْكُمْ ۗ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ  
يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ ۗ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ



مِنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ مَا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ  
 يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قُتِلْنَا هَهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي  
 بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَىٰ مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا  
 فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحَّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ  
 الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٥٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا  
 اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾ يَتَأَيَّأُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا  
 لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا عُزَّىٰ لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا  
 مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ وَيُمِيتُ  
 وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَلَئِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ  
 لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَلَئِنْ مُتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ  
 لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

- (3:149) O you who are secure in your commitment [to Allah]! If you give way to the deniers [of Allah], they will cause you to backtrack on your heels, and you will be failures.
- (3:150) No, but Allah is your Supreme Sustainer, and His is the best support.

- (3:151) Into the hearts of those who are [hell] bent on rejecting Allah [and His power status] We shall cast terror in return for their imputing authority and divinity, side by side with Allah, to other beings — [something] for which He has never given any warrant from on high; and their destination is the Fire — and how evil that domicile is for oppressors!
- (3:152) And, indeed, Allah made good His promise to you when by His consent, you were about to destroy your foes — until the moment when you lost heart and acted contrary to the [Prophet's] command, and disobeyed after He had brought you within view of that [victory] for which you were longing. There were among you such as cared for this world [alone], just as there were among you such as cared for the life to come; whereupon, in order that He might put you to a test, He prevented you from defeating your foes. But now He has effaced your sin, for Allah is limitless in His bounty to those who are committed to Him [and His expression of power].
- (3:153) [Remember the time] when you fled, paying no heed to anyone, while behind you the Apostle was calling out to you; wherefore He requited you with agony in return for [the Apostle's] agony, so that you should not be grieved [merely] over what had escaped you, nor over what had befallen you: for Allah is aware of all that you do.
- (3:154) Then, after this agony, He sent down upon you a sense of security, a restorative rest which misted some of you, while others, who cared mainly for themselves, entertained doubting thoughts about Allah — thoughts [reminiscent] of the age of idiocracy — saying, “Did we, then, have any power of decision [in this matter]?” Say, “Indeed, all power of [ultimate] decision does rest with Allah;” [but as for them], they are trying to conceal within themselves that [failing of commitment] which they would not reveal to you, [O Prophet, by] saying, “If we had any power of decision, we would not have left so many dead [individuals] behind.” Say [to them], “Even if you had remained in [the apparent security of] your

homes, those [of you] whose death had been ordained would indeed have gone forth to the places where they were destined to lie down.” And [all this befell you] so that Allah might put to a test all that you cloak in your bosoms, and render your innermost hearts pure of all dross, for Allah is aware of what is in the hearts [of men].

- (3:155) Behold, as for those who abandoned [their military duties] on the day when the two armies met in battle, Satan caused them to slip only by means of something they [themselves] had done. But now Allah has forgiven them; verily, Allah is Much-Forgiving, Forbearing.
- (3:156) O you who are securely committed to Allah! Be not like those who reject Allah [and His power in man’s military affairs] and say of their brethren [who die] after they set out on a journey to faraway places or go forth to war, “Had they but remained with us, they would not have died,” or “They would not have been killed;” for Allah will cause such thoughts to become a source of bitter regret in their hearts, since it is Allah who grants life and deals death. And Allah watches all that you do.
- (3:157) And if indeed you are killed or die in Allah’s cause, then surely forgiveness from Allah and His mercy are better than all that one could hoard [in this world];
- (3:158) For, indeed, if you die or are killed, it will surely be to Allah that you shall be gathered (Āl ‘Imrān:149–158).

Muslims today need to take the time to make the connection between what Allah (ﷻ) is telling them in these *āyāt* and the real-world situation. It should be clear by now that there is in this world a bloc of people defined by Allah’s (ﷻ) words *al-ladhīna āmanū* (the committed and covenant-carrying Muslims), and there is another bloc of people defined by Allah’s (ﷻ) words *al-ladhīna kafarū* (rulers and others who defy Allah (ﷻ) and deny His power presence in human affairs). If we do not step back and identify these Qur’anic descriptions with real people in the real world, and draw real conclusions from this identification, then we have failed

to take Allah's (ﷻ) words into our lives and the reality in which we are living.

The success of the Muhammadi generation of dedicated Muslims was that they were able to relate the Qur'anic words to their real lives, in practical terms, and thus act on the basis of a clear understanding of who *al-ladhīna āmanū* were and who *al-ladhīna kafarū* were. It was these two blocs of people who met at Uḥud, with the consequences discussed above. And when the military encounter was over, the relationship between both sides did not change. After Uḥud, the *kāfirs* were still the *kāfirs* they had been before Uḥud. And these *kāfirs* were determined to continue their war against the covenant-bearing Muslims in other ways to dismantle their scriptural attachment with Allah (ﷻ). One way they used to subvert the Islamic camp was to gain the "confidence" of as many Muslims as they could. But before some Muslims fell into this trap, Allah (ﷻ) was there to rescue them with His words of caution, "If you give way to the *kāfirs* they will inflict a defeat on you and you will end up the losers... No, but Allah is your Superior and authoritative ally and He is the utmost supporter."

### Psy-ops and Battlefield Entanglements Go Together

The implications of the war at Uḥud were as valuable as its experience was painful. The experience of a genuine military setback provided the Muslims with essential lessons they could not otherwise have learned. Beyond that, the realization or impression that the Muslims were defeatable prompted the *kāfirs* to entreat the pliable Muslims into their sphere of influence. Had the Muslims achieved another outright victory at Uḥud, to go with their success at Badr, there would not have been many among the Muslims willing to listen to the blandishments of the *kāfirs*. But the apparent defeat of the Muslims at Uḥud encouraged the *kāfirs* to use psychology against the back-slipping Muslims in the aftermath of Uḥud. It is this dynamic that Allah (ﷻ) is diagnosing in this sequence of *āyāt*. These *āyāt* are laden with meanings that force us to understand the nature of the difference between *imān* and *kufr*.

**O you who are steadfastly committed! If you stop resisting the deniers of Allah, they will repel you into a retreating mode, and then you will be the unsuccessful people. Rather, Allah is your Supreme Superior and He is the Incomparable Supporter (3:149–150).**

This *āyah* has to be put in context. It was revealed by Allah (ﷻ) in response to the efforts of the struggling Muslims at Uḥud. When word spread that the Muslims, who had gone to Uḥud to do battle with the *mushriks* from Makkah, had been defeated, the *kāfirs*, the Yahūd, and the *munāfiqs* all felt a common satisfaction at the setback suffered by the bruised, scarred, and bloodied Muslims. For these anti-Islamic types, this was the ideal time to demoralize and deflate the Muslims as much as is possible. The triangulation of interests between the *kāfirs*, Yahūd, and *munāfiqs* uncovered for them an open opportunity to drive a wedge between Muhammad (ﷺ) as a military commander and the rest of the rank-and-file Muslims. They thought this would be the best time to drive home the point to the common Muslim that religion should be all about “spirituality” and “personal” affairs, and that when you take religion to the war front, this is what happens. Besides which, the Muslims should not have messed with the *mushriks* of Makkah; they are an awesome power and their revenge is vehement, resulting in a bloody military encounter that really was not suitable for men of God! For these cunning enemies of Islam, the defeat of the Muslims at Uḥud was not enough; they sought to maximize its impact by their poisonous propaganda.

They knew then — as our enemies know now — that the best time to penetrate the Muslim psychology is when the Muslims are in “low spirits,” such as immediately after the end of the unsuccessful campaign at Uḥud. Any leadership is most vulnerable when it does not win a war. These enemies of the Muslims wanted to use the debacle at Uḥud to undermine Muhammad’s (ﷺ) leadership, if not discredit it altogether. And due to the clout these three factions of people had in the Arabian Peninsula, the word went around: the Muslims should learn a lesson from Uḥud;

they should not over-stretch themselves and take on well-established powers such as the Makkan aristocracy. Muslims now should think of a way to disengage themselves from the military course. And if they are prudent enough, they should reach an accommodation with the *mushriks* who were victorious at Uḥud. It was easy to play on the emotions of the bereaved relatives of the Muslim *shahīds* at Uḥud; it was also well-timed to ignite an emotional resentment among the Muslims because of the ill consequences at Uḥud. And this, they hoped, would eat away at the Islamic power structure in Madinah, as well as raise doubts about Islam as a scriptural ideology.

It is precisely in the context of this socio-psychological dynamic that the above *āyāt* were revealed. That is exactly why Allah (ﷻ) cautions the Muslims who are struggling to fulfill their divine commitment not to soften their approach with their *kāfir* enemies. Allah (ﷻ) says in plain-spoken words that if the Muslims accede to these *kāfirs*, they are doomed to failure. They will gain nothing and they will win nothing. They will not even hold on to what they have; in fact, they will begin to slide into *kufr* itself. The fact of life is, as pronounced here in this Book of truth and as demonstrated in the experiences of history, that once the Muslims are committed to Allah (ﷻ), there is no compromise with the *kāfirs*. It is a long and intense struggle. And once someone — a “Muslim leader” — steps out of line and thinks it is possible to reach a modus operandi with *kufr*, then it is downhill for the rest of the Muslims who will eventually find themselves in a system of *kufr* instead of in Allah’s (ﷻ) *dīn*.

These ideas were around even then, when Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) himself was there, leading and guiding the new Muslim community. And imagine what Muslim leaders may be thinking now, 1,400 years detached from the Prophet’s (ﷺ) example. They think they can “normalize” their relations with the *kāfirs* while at the same time claim they are the “defenders of the faith.” And all this is happening in front of Muslims’ eyes while they routinely and unthinkingly read these words from Allah (ﷻ). No one seems to understand the nature of this struggle between those who accept

and carry divine responsibilities, and those who care only for their worldly interests; between the upward-moving Muslims and the downward-pulling *kāfirs*. We cannot move in both directions at the same time unless we want to rip ourselves apart.

It is clearly stated in these *āyāt* that the Muslims either fight and defend their relationship with Allah (ﷻ), and so prosper, or negotiate and diminish their status before the *kāfirs* in the heat of war, and end up losing both the distinction they have in this world and the prestige awaiting them in the coming world. How can a Muslim who respects himself be willing to trade what Allah (ﷻ) has given him for the sugarcoated poison that is offered by Shayṭān, as represented by the historical and contemporary triumvirate of the *kāfirs*, the Yahūd, and the *munāfiqs*. This trio uses toxic weapons to kill Muslims on the battlefield and toxic words to mislead them in their living rooms. Is it possible for there to be Muslims who are willing to stand up to deadly weapons during times of war, but who are not willing to stand up to the deadly words coming from the exact same sources in the aftermath of these fierce wars? Muslims in positions of leadership in these war-filled times are failing to live up to the example the Prophet (ﷺ) bequeathed them from that epic battle at Uḥud. How can our official Muslims be moving into intimate and confident relations with the *kāfirs* of today when a war of destiny is taking shape between the descendants of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), and the descendants of Allah’s (ﷻ) enemies from Uḥud?

For those who may regard this argument to be too abstract, consider for a moment how the *kāfirs* feel when they think that Muslims committed to self-determination are being routed on the multiple fronts of engagement in what they call their “war against terror.” Here is a taste of some of the things they say among themselves about the state of their war on Muslims. They say that often the most dangerous time of a war is not at the moment of certain battle, but during the long periods of uncertainty in between major fighting. Currently, the Muslims are at precisely such a moment. The Taliban have been overturned — their leaders killed, arrested or scattered — but Afghanistan remains ungoverned and danger-

ous. The Iraqi people remain restive, although most recognize that the US is something they have to learn to live with for the foreseeable future. Iran simmers over a nuclear flame, while the afterglow of the heroic US victory in Iraq fades as the dreary, but deadly, Iraqi municipal management quietly filters through the news. Overarching these events, the war on al-Qaeda continues, the events of which are known to the public largely by episodic governmental releases of secret information. Provision for homeland defense has become the almost exclusive possession of bureaucrats, experts, and the occasional interested congressman, senator, or journalist. Of course, Middle East peace remains elusive.<sup>278</sup>

The public understands better than the pundits and politicians the nature of this war on terrorism. Iraq, Afghanistan, al-Qaeda, homeland security, the Middle East peace effort, the democracy project for the Middle East, and Iran — it is all related to an adversary that is never going away. The American public is in this for the long haul. They will not turn on the president for sticking it out in Iraq, Afghanistan, or anywhere else that makes sense. They understand this is a war to the death — either the terrorists and their hosts, or ours. If these deaths are seen to be necessary for victory, many deaths will be honored by the public. If they are seen as meaningless errors, even one would be seen as too many. The continuing deaths of American and British soldiers in Iraq should not be rhetorically minimized, but sanctified.

These ideas come from *al-ladhīna kafarū*, and nothing else should be expected from them; but how do *masjid-going* Muslim officials justify their cozy relationship with these *kāfirs*, in which the *kāfirs* occupy commanding positions over the rulers of Muslim countries who simply take their marching orders? Today this superior-inferior relationship is most pronounced in Afghanistan and Iraq, followed very closely by Saudi Arabia and Egypt; by the time these words are read, there may well have developed other flagrant violations of the meanings of these *āyāt*. The sweet-sounding words coming from the propaganda mouthpieces of these *kāfirs* conceal their diehard animosity toward Islamic self-determination; in much of their talk, the word *Islam* is not used at all, even though it is



clearly the main object of their enmity and military operations. In such a climate, Muslims are well advised to understand Allah (ﷻ) when He says, **“O you who are firmly committed! If you ease up to the deniers of Allah [and His power] they will countermand your [military gains] and then you will wind up losing.”**

The contemporary enemies of Islam have access to all the rumor mills and propaganda channels against Muslims who are in an emerging state of war against aggression and occupation. And when the Muslims themselves are detached from this Qur’anic anchor, they become vulnerable to the schismatic propaganda and corrosive rumors that are meant to force the Muslims to surrender or at least to lose interest in prosecuting the war until its conclusive end. This has happened hundreds of times throughout the Palestinian national liberation struggle against Zionism, whether it was during the Battle of Karāmah in Jordan (1968), during the early years of the Palestinian struggle, or during Israel’s long and varied incursions, attacks, and offensives against the Palestinians in Lebanon.<sup>279</sup> The difference is that in those days the Palestinians were not anchored into the Qur’an and so did not have the psychological strength that is needed in times of war, when rumors and propaganda can be as lethal as bullets and bombs.

And on this note, there is a contingent of Muslims who have turned a blind eye to the Qur’anic endowment and the Prophet’s (ﷺ) experience. They behave as if there is no rich history that defines who the *mushriks*, the *kāfirs*, and the *munāfiqs* are. They want to begin from scratch, so to speak. They make believe that the world is as forgiving and forgetting as they are. And they, in this day and time, are outspoken about normalizing relations with the proven enemies of Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the sacrificing Muslims. This contingent of Muslims has its members in Arabia, Persia, Anatolia, the Indian Subcontinent, and beyond.<sup>280</sup>

Muslims who internalize the meanings of these *āyāt* understand that petro-dollars and riyals have corrupted the Saudi ruling family beyond redemption, even as the average citizens of Arabia and the many non-Saudis, who work there in near-slave conditions, are slipping down the social and economic ladder. There is a

geometrical congruity of sorts between the flow of blood in Palestine and the flow of champagne in Arabia. The Palestinians bleed because of the absence of an Islamic military and the Saudis glutonize because of the absence of an Islamic psychology. While the Palestinians shed tears because of their bloody plight, the Saudi officials shed tears of self-indulgent laughter. And this is supposed to be one Ummah! When Muslims do not heed the *āyah*, “**No, but Allah alone is your Supreme Sustainer, and He is the Best Supporter,**” they give license to a government of *kufr* in the United States to say it wants to have democracy in Iraq. How about democracy in their own ally, Saudi Arabia, to begin with? Or are the officials of *kufr* scared that if they were to agitate for a popular and representative government in their closest “Muslim” ally, Osama bin Laden would defeat any member of the Saudi royal family by a landslide?<sup>281</sup>

The words of this Qur’an are not a joke. Allah (ﷻ) is our Superior and He is the best One to support us. If we choose another course, if we ignore Allah (ﷻ), and if we want others to support us besides Allah (ﷻ), then we are asking for trouble. And that is why we are where we are today: differences and divisions beyond measure at the level of ordinary Muslims, and regimes that prefer to play God, rather than obeying Him, at the level of our elites.

### **Terrorism Is the Battle Cry of the Oppressed**

The Qur’an presses on with its lessons,

**We will cast terror into the hearts of those who deny Allah [and His power] in return for ascribing authority and divinity, side by side with Allah, to other beings — [something] for which He has never bestowed any warrant from on high; and their destination is the Fire — and how evil that domicile is for oppressors! (3:151).**

*Terror* is a fact of life when it comes to guilty politicians and diplomats, financiers, and money-lenders who have knowledge of their

instruments of absolutism and oppression. In this *āyah*, Allah (ﷻ) says He will instill terror into the hearts of *kāfirs*. He says this while the Muslims were militarily engaged in the warfare of Uḥud. This is clear confirmation of Allah’s (ﷻ) direct involvement in the struggle of the combatant Muslims. When the Muslims at Uḥud were concerned about their failure to score a decisive victory against the *kāfirs*, Allah (ﷻ) assured them He had accomplished a decisive psychological victory **“We will cast terror into the hearts of the *kāfirs*...”** Terror, contrary to the convenient arguments of politicians today, is not a new phenomenon. It did not begin with Palestinians hijacking Israeli aircraft or bombing Israeli cities. *Terror* is what is felt in the hearts of guilt-ridden officials in executive positions who send military forces against innocent people in their homes, fields, and lands, in pursuit of their own selfish agendas. Terrorism is the reply of the weak and downtrodden to actions taken by power-maniac governments, irreproachable and unimpeachable chief executives, or capital and profit-centered interest groups who use manipulations, threats, and systematic violence for their self-serving political purposes.

The low-level terrorism that has become a media obsession and is used to justify the escalation of violence by those in power is in fact a response to the mega-terrorism that passes without comment, despite the massive suffering it inflicts on the world’s weakest people. Acts of systematic and organized state violence have included the use of nuclear bombs in Japan; the military occupations by industrial nation-states of resource-rich countries in such regions as Africa, Asia, and Latin America; and the Western intelligence services’ assassinations of popular resistance leaders wherever they may emerge. Such political terrorism holds billions of people hostage to the interests of the capitalist elite, determined to secure even more profits at any expense. All state-sponsored terrorism is launched from countries that are dominated by financial interests and is targeted at the rights of others who are less powerful and less aggressive. The least acknowledged fact is that the greatest violence is aimed at the committed Muslims who alone have the potential to liberate mankind from the clutches of these “national” interests.

Mega-violence has been used increasingly in recent years by militarily powerful governments seeking to gain economic and political control of the less economically and socially developed parts of the world. Organized and coordinated international violence has also been used by such governments as the US, the UK, and Israel to maintain their positions of power, which they feel are threatened by peoples' awareness, conscience, and desire for liberation. The United States government has been the last recourse to the most demeaning use of military force for the purposes stated above. And in so doing, the United States government has inherited the position and role of Makkah's *mushriks* and *kāfirs*. And if it chooses to fight against freedom-loving Muslims and people in Asia and Africa who want self-determination, it will incur the meanings of this *āyah*, **“We will cast terror into the hearts of the *kāfirs*...”** This terror has nothing to do with so-called weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Muslims, especially committed Muslims, do not have weapons of mass destruction and do not need them. What Muslims do have, however, is their determination to be on Allah's (ﷻ) side in seeking a just solution to problems of war and aggression in which they find themselves located.

Muslims must read this *āyah* very slowly and carefully, **“We will cast terror into the hearts of the *kāfirs*.”** And we must understand that this commitment of Allah (ﷻ) to the cause of the Muslims engaged in struggle with the *kāfirs* comes in the context of the Battle of Uḥud, the details and dynamics of which inform us of the nature of this divine commitment and explain to us how Allah (ﷻ) is on our side. The first condition for Allah's (ﷻ) intervention on the side of His subjects against their enemies is that these Muslims must have no ties of allegiance with *kāfirs*. The second condition for Allah's (ﷻ) engagement in the battle is that the fighting and faithful Muslims proclaim Allah (ﷻ) as their superior and supporter. When these two prerogatives become established facts in the internal thoughts and external actions of the Muslim warriors, Allah (ﷻ) becomes party to the battle, and in doing so He **“casts terror into the hearts”** of those who deny Him.

But Muslims cannot expect Allah (ﷻ) to support them if they are shuttling between *kāfir* and *mushrik* leaders around the world in order to secure their support. These *kāfirs* and *mushriks* are Allah's (ﷻ) enemies; how can the Muslims expect to be favored by both Allah (ﷻ) and His enemies? Let us put this *āyah* in its real historical and prophetic context,

**O you who are committed to Allah! If you obey [active] *kāfirs*, they will thwart your progress, causing you to suffer losses. Rather it is Allah who is your Superior and He is the Best of benefactors. We will instill terror into the hearts of the active deniers [of Allah] because they have set up multiple [higher] allegiances without any divine basis; their haven is the Fire, and what a refuge for outlaws (3:149–151).**

These *āyāt* were a response to the *munāfiqs* who said to the struggling and sacrificing Muslims of Uḥud when defeat was in the air, “Go back to your brethren [the *mushriks*] and rehabilitate yourselves into their *dīn* [common practice and social convention].”<sup>282</sup> When it appeared that the Battle of Uḥud had been lost, such “advice” came from unexpected quarters. Some people told these Muslims literally bleeding around the Prophet (ﷺ), “If only you would seek the advice and guidance of the politically wise Yahūd and Naṣārā. Listen to them! You did not really understand what they had to say to you... On second thought, there may be wisdom in their warnings about Muhammad and his companions — if he was truly a prophet he would not have encountered such a fiasco and debacle [at Uḥud]. In hindsight, it now appears that Muhammad is just like everyone else: one day he wins, another day he loses!”<sup>283</sup> Hence the *āyah*, “**O you who are bonded to Allah by commitment! If you as much as yield to active *kāfirs* they will foil your military advances and you will suffer losses.**”

Another human element at work here is the subject of the *āyah* “**We will thrust terror into the hearts of those actively opposed to Allah...**” Presented to us here in the Qur'an, this is the

real position taken by Abū Sufyān and the *mushriks* who had left Uḥud feeling they had disappointed the ambitions and expectations of the Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ). On their way back to Makkah, these *mushriks* decided they had made a mistake in not finishing the Muslims off altogether and forever. They said to themselves, “We really did not do the right thing. We killed many of those [Muslims] but then we let many of them get away. Let us go back and finish them off.” But after deciding to do that, they lost their nerve, felt terror in their hearts, and dropped the idea of returning to do battle with the Muslims again. Instead they continued on their way back to Makkah.

It should now be absolutely clear that those who are actively opposed to Allah (ﷻ) — the *kāfirs* in this *āyah* — include the Arabian *mushriks*, the ideological and political stalwarts of Yahūd and Naṣārā, and the “Muslim” *munāfiqs*, all of whom found common purpose in depriving the covenant-bearing Muslims of power and a state, and all of whom would soon be shocked and disappointed by the Muslim response to this apparent setback at Uḥud.

If there are any Muslims engaged in the contemporary Islamic struggle against Western hegemonic imperialism, and are looking for relevant *āyāt* to engage their minds on this challenge, these *āyāt* should be among them. In this intensifying struggle for Islamic self-determination, the experience of Uḥud presents the rest of the Muslims with a clear warning of the danger posed by the *kāfirs*, who are always wary of and determined to prevent Islamic self-determination. There cannot be any Islamic self-determination as long as there are rulers in majority Muslim countries, from hereditary kings to gunshot generals, who take their orders from active *kāfirs*, and not from the Living Lord. And if Muslims ask how they got to where they are today, why they have become the *untermenschen* of the human race, one of the simple answers is that they are no longer the subjects of Allah (ﷻ) — they have willingly become the slaves of man. The lesson for Muslims is clear: if you cede and concede to those who deny Allah’s (ﷻ) power and those who repudiate the scripture His Messenger (ﷺ) came with — such as Abū Sufyān back then and the royal Saudi siblings nowadays, or

‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy and his soul brothers today, who are Muslim in name but loyal agents of the *kāfirs* at the same time — then you will revert to *kufr*, however faithfully you may previously have carried out your Islamic responsibilities.

We Muslims are expected to take on the responsibility for establishing Islam in this world, as the following *āyah* indicates,

**Allah has promised those of you, who are committed to Him and thereby do what is right, that, of a certainty, He will cause them to accede to power on earth, even as He caused [some of] those who lived before them to accede to it; and that, of a certainty, He will build up and fortify their *dīn* [Islamic civilization and culture] which He has been pleased to bestow on them; and that, of a certainty, He will cause their foregone state of fear to be replaced by a sense of security. [Seeing that] they conform and comply to Me [alone], not demoting Me to [just another among] multiple loyalties and allegiances. But all who, after [understanding] this, choose to deny the truth [of My power] — it is they, they who are truly broken into pieces [by separating from the covenant] (24:55).**

But how can the general Muslim public be reminded of such *āyāt* when their reprobate rulers — monarchs and generals alike — refuse to listen to the meanings of these *āyāt*? The typical “head of state” in a Muslim country is all too happy with the pious public and private recitation of these *āyāt* so long as their context and deeper meanings are lost on the vast majority of people. It is this context that must be communicated to the Muslim public if the message of this living Document is to gain its rightful place in their lives. We should not forget that in the war atmosphere of *Sūrah al-Anfāl* it is Allah (ﷻ) who tells us, “**Be advised that Allah is your authoritative superior — [and] how excellent is this Authoritative Superior, and how excellent this Presenter of Support**” (8:40). Allah (ﷻ) has also established that dispositions of

self-respect and high personal worth, as well as satisfaction with God-induced achievements, belong to His Prophet (ﷺ) and to the covenant-holding Muslims, “And to Allah belongs *al-‘izzah* [majesty, self-sufficiency, and self-confidence] and to His Messenger and to the committed Muslims” (63:8).

It is not in the nature of things to apply this majesty to those who will oppose Allah (ﷻ), even to the extent of combat, as is the case in this *jāhili* (ignocratic) world. It has become a perverse norm that *kāfirs* routinely occupy the most influential positions in the world, while those who are supposed to be committed Muslims, composed of almost one-third of the human population, are little more than a passive herd. If the Muslims had the God-given impulse to break away from false, ineffectual powers and adhere instead to the One True Power, they would not be where they are today. Our hope must be placed in that new breed of Muslims on the rise, and not on the old, war-weary generation on its way out.

**Have they then never journeyed about the earth and beheld what happened in the end to those [God-deniers] who lived before their time? Allah destroyed them utterly: and the like thereof awaits all who deny the truth [of Allah’s power]. This is because Allah is the Authoritative Superior of all who commit to Him, whereas they who deny Him have no one to authoritatively supervise them (47:10–11).**

In the modern world, *terrorism* has been defined by those who exercise the greatest influence on the direction and shape of public attitudes. The generally Euro-American recipients of terror employ their definition of it — coupled with all the historical distortions and ideological considerations that are part of the social engineering process — to their own advantage. A fairly typical dictionary definition of *terrorism* reads,

...the use or threatened use of violence for a political purpose to create a state of fear which will aid in extort-



ing, coercing, intimidating, or causing individuals and groups to alter their behavior.<sup>284</sup>

Other general features can be added to this definition: a “terrorist group” does not need a defined territorial base or specific organizational structure. Its goals need not relate to any one country. It does not require, nor necessarily seeks a popular basis or support. Its operations, organization, and movements are secret. Its activities do not conform to the rules of law or warfare. Its targets are civilians, non-combatants, bystanders, or symbolic persons and places. Its victims generally have no role in either causing or correcting the grievance of terrorists. Its methods are hostage-taking, aircraft piracy or sabotage, assassination, threats, hoaxes, and indiscriminate bombings or shootings. Terrorism is international when the victims, the actors, the location of a terrorist incident, or the means used to carry out the act involve more than one country.

The trans-global bosses, for whom such definitions are concocted, do not wish to give terrorism its root definition. They are concerned with symptomatic terrorism — terrorism of the retail variety. Had they the courage to turn the mirror on themselves they would realize that their’s is an endemic form of organized, structural, and systemic terrorism that comes back to haunt them when their weak and powerless victims turn their meager resources to addressing localized injustice. The results include all the associated psychobabble that characterizes refined media presentations of how awful and bloody suicide terrorism can be, while the genocidal strategies and war plans of the powerful are terrible but reasonable, bloody but warranted — anything indeed but terrorism per se.<sup>285</sup>

The key strategy they are using today is to link Islamic self-determination with *terrorism*. Just as the assertion at Uḥud, that Muhammad (ﷺ) was killed, to try to dishearten the Muslims then, the word being circulated today is that Islamic self-determination and jihad for that purpose have become “terrorism.” This is obviously intended to give Islam and Muslims a bad name because they are the one historical adversary of *kufir* that has successfully beaten it back, and have all the potential to repeat earlier successes.

The experiences gained by the powers of *kuf*r throughout a long history of opposing God has now been distilled to near “perfection” in the sophisticated and multifaceted strategy executed by worldwide media and pseudo-intellectual academia to conflate Islam and terrorism as indistinguishable, synonymous, and cross-functional. No one in his right mind equivocally states that Islam is terrorism per se. That would be an act of intellectual suicide. So they have to go about the task in a roundabout manner.

These polished spin doctors ask: is the war on terrorism (that is, Islam) *really about terrorism*? And they in their oblique and diversionary manner answer: yes and no. They tell everyone — Muslims who are supposed to know better by virtue of this holy Writ, and ordinary people who do not know anything about their conniving politicians, much less about the integrity and honesty of committed Muslims — that terrorism is really not an *-ism*, it is a weapon. Thus, one of the goals of these freedom-lovers should be the abolition of that weapon, just as they claim to be busy abolishing biological or nuclear weapons, especially when these weapons belong to Muslims. At the same time, they do not lose one night’s sleep knowing that Zionist Israel has more of this deadly stuff than all the Muslims in the world combined.

The *kuf*rologists expend much time and material explaining to the world that terrorism (read Islam) violates one of the oldest laws of war — the prohibition on intentionally targeting noncombatants. As long ago as the Middle Ages, such slaughter was considered barbaric and dishonorable, they constantly reiterate. However, this high-sounding rhetoric has always fallen silent when it comes to the US military and the subject of atomic weapons dropped on the civilian Japanese populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>286</sup> In this century, the opinion-manufacturers in the world of virtual *kuf*r say that for pragmatic reasons, they should not retreat from the view that indiscriminate killing of innocents is unconscionable. If “terrorism” (Islam) is rewarded, given legitimacy or even just excused, the inevitable result will be more terrorism (Islam). If, on the other hand, everyone understands that terrorism delegitimizes those who use it — as well as their cause — and if terrorists are consistently

fought and consistently defeated, terrorism will eventually come to be seen as a dead end, and its use will fade.<sup>287</sup>

These theoreticians of *kufr* ask: is the war on terrorism World War IV? That is the name given to this conflict by one Eliot A. Cohen and former director of the United States Central Intelligence Agency James Woolsey.<sup>288</sup> What they intend to suggest is that the war is as much of an existential threat to the USA as were World Wars I and II and the Cold War, which the same individuals characterize as World War III.<sup>289</sup>

Experienced Muslims should be reminded of these *āyāt* every time the issue of “terrorism” comes up and is used as a weapon in the arsenal of propaganda aimed at sacrificing Muslims whose unforgiveable “crime” is to seek self-determination. A “terrorist” is not a pitifully demilitarized Muslim whose homeland has been stolen away, whose dwelling has been demolished, whose life opportunities have been denied, and who then straps himself with explosives to strike a blow against the perpetrators of this injustice; rather, terrorism is the force and impact of the lethal policies enacted daily by those criminals who push buttons from their high offices in Tel Aviv and Washington. Notice that the victims of such high crimes and misdemeanors — such as the Palestinians and Kashmiris, for example — are never described as being “terrorized,” even though they are exposed, vulnerable, and defenseless. They face their deadly enemies with valor, high spirits, and endurance; while their enemies — equipped with all the latest weapons of destruction and death, and protected by every kind of armor — are insecure, claustrophobic, and terrified.

The parallels with the situation of the early Muslims fighting at Uḥud are striking. The hearts of their Makkan antagonists were filled with terror and fear because they were militarily attacking principled and scrupulous Muslims; and the same terror will strike the Israelis and their Zionist supporters as long as they place the Muslims within range of their artillery barrages and forays.

The most important prerequisite for this to happen, however, is to understand not only that committed Muslims cannot be underlings and subordinates of the *kāfirs*, but also that they must

renounce any agreement that places an Islamic society within the political and ideological sphere of influence of the powers of *kufr*. This lesson has been taught to the Muslims time and again through these timeless *āyāt* as they shed light on the events of the *Sīrah*, yet some Muslims simply refuse to acknowledge them. The *kāfirs* — and there are real *kāfirs* in the world — are implacably and unremittingly hostile to all Muslims who honor Allah’s (ﷻ) covenant. They miss no opportunity to mislead the hard-working Muslims. By the force of these *āyāt* and generations of pain and ostracism resulting from marginalizing the Qur’an, the Muslims simply cannot afford any longer to fall into the sophisticated traps laid for them.

These *āyāt* shine. The experiences of the Muslims during the early confrontations between practical Islam and bullheaded *kufr*, when the Prophet (ﷺ) took them to new heights, are self-explanatory and distinct. But despite that there are still compromising Muslims who have an affinity and a penchant for *kufr* and its power structures. In our day and time, the “royals” of Arabia unabashedly proclaim their proud attachment to the establishment of *kufr* in the USA. Before 9/11, the relationship was discreet, although it was an open secret. But since then the affair has gone public. A year after 9/11, the Saudi embassy in Washington published an open letter from Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, then the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, as a full-page advertisement in the *Washington Post* (which must have cost about \$75,000). Such is its revelatory importance, about how the rulers of Islam’s birthplace have thrown the Qur’an to the wind and instead kowtow to the *kāfirs*, that portions of it are worth quoting,

Dear Mr. President:

On the eve of the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks against the American people, I take the opportunity to renew to you and the families of the victims and indeed the entire American nation, the sincere condolences and sympathy of the Saudi people and myself.

...The target of the terrorists who engineered this crime was humanity at large. They hoped that this outrageous act would incite and ignite bloody strife among different faiths and civilizations. But their evil was turned against them, for all humanity united to fight terrorism, and wise voices from all corners of the world arose to echo your declaration that terrorism has no religion or nationality; that it is pure evil, condemned and abhorred by all religions and cultures.

...They also aimed at causing considerable harm to the historic and strong relationship between the American people and the people of Saudi Arabia. I would like to make it clear that true Muslims all over the world will never allow a minority of deviant extremists to speak in the name of Islam and distort its spirit of tolerance. Your friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia denounced and condemned the September 11 attacks as strongly as did the American people. We, like you, are convinced that nothing can ever justify the shedding of innocent blood or the taking of lives and the terrorizing of people, regardless of whatever cause or motive.

...The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to stand solidly against terrorism. We shall act, independently as well as collectively, with the US-led coalition to wage a fierce and merciless war against the terrorists in order to eradicate this deadly disease that threatens all societies.

In conclusion, I would like to say to you, my dear friend, that God Almighty, in His wisdom, tests the faithful by allowing such calamities to happen...

Sincerely,  
Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud  
Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister,  
and Commander of the National Guard<sup>290</sup>

This is a direct statement of what the “custodians of the Ḥaramayn” say to *al-ladhīna kafarū*. It is telling indeed to read such statements in light of what Allah (ﷻ) is saying so vividly, **“O you who are committed [to Allah]! If you defer to *al-ladhīna kafarū* they will set you back and you will sustain losses. Rather, Allah alone is your Superior Authority, and His is the best support” (3:149–150).**

If these rulers, imposed on Makkah and Madinah, were going by the Book they would not be idolizing the establishmentarians of *kufṛ* such as President Bush or any in his circle of officials.<sup>291</sup> Some may retort, “Oh, but these are just words; in reality the Saudi seniors are supportive of the Islamic movement...” But a shift in focus from the pages of the *Washington Post* to realities on the ground in Arabia unmask the American-sponsored Saudi system as one that is waging war on Muslims who take Islam beyond rhetoric and are trying, albeit with obvious mistakes here and there, to make it a social reality. Within the first two years of its American-inspired war against Muslims of self-determination after 9/11, Saudi Arabia had interrogated more than 2,000 individuals, made more than 300 “terror-related” arrests, and in just one month referred 90 “terror suspects” to the courts to stand trial. Many of the arrests of major activists around the world were made possible because of Saudi assistance. And in February 2003, CIA director George Tenet stated, “The Saudis are providing increasingly important support to our counterterrorism efforts — from arrests to sharing debriefing results.”<sup>292</sup>

Since 9/11, Saudi Arabia has conducted a thorough review of its charitable organizations and made a number of specific changes. It set up a Financial Intelligence Unit, linking its central bank with other banks in the kingdom to track suspected transactions. A High Commission for oversight of charities was established, and charities are now subject to regular mandatory audits. Any of their activities that extend beyond the country’s borders must now be coordinated with the Foreign Ministry. Saudi Arabia has been a member of the international Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for quite some time. It was one of the first members to complete

two FATF self-assessment programs, one regarding 40 FATF recommendations on the prevention of money laundering and the other regarding eight specific recommendations on financing organizations contributing to the global Islamic movement (something referred to in official circles as “terrorist financing”).<sup>293</sup>

Senior American officials have publicly and consistently praised Saudi Arabia for its positive contributions to the war against terrorism. President George W. Bush has said, “As far as the Saudi Arabians go... they’ve been nothing but cooperative.”<sup>294</sup>

Given this clear evidence of the relationship between the main power of *kufr* in the world today and the Muslim rulers of the heartlands of Islam, there can no longer be any excuse for lazy-minded Muslims to pretend there are no political and military institutions in the world that deny Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the committed Muslims their place of respect, honor, and dignity. The much-heralded “war against terrorism” is political double-speak, a noxious term that hides an insidious war against Islamic self-determination. And the royal Saudi government is on the devil’s side.<sup>295</sup> There is nothing whatsoever in Saudi policies and strategies that would affirm the *āyah*, **“But, rather, Allah alone is your Authoritative Superior, and He is the best Supporter.”**

Let there be no doubt that “terrorism” is not a fiction. It is a substantial part of the conflict between Muslims committed to Islam and self-determination, and *kāfirs* who are hell-bent on denying Muslims their God-given rights pertaining to Islamic socio-economic integration and political consolidation. There is a sizeable difference between a war prosecuted by a central Islamic authority in Madinah led by Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ), and the current war against Islamic self-determination in which Muslims are reeling from the absence of any central Islamic authority. In the former, even though the early Muslims suffered an indecisive military encounter at Uḥud, they in the process exposed the *munāfiqs* (dual-loyalists). In the latter, however, a class of dual-loyalists, who pay lip service to the Islamic cause, are making all their financial and military resources available to the *kāfirs*, to be used in the war against Islam.

With the Islamic state led by a sincere Islamic leadership, the *munāfiqs* around the Prophet (ﷺ) after Uḥud were exposed like terrified mice. But now, without an Islamic leadership, those same dual-loyalist cowards have become the “custodians of the Ḥaramayn,” whose “legitimacy,” lives, and survival depend on their *kāfir* superiors.

When will the war on terror be won? No one knows for certain, as terror has its media definition as well as its intelligence definition. It is a stigma carried by the oppressed and a “badge of honor” carried by the twilight forces working behind the scenes away from public scrutiny or accountability. This whole psychology has been foisted upon Muslims committed to self-determination in order to dissuade them from their natural and God-given right to fight for their independence, freedom, and way of life. The partisan media owned by the world of *kufir*, which seeks to tar the Muslims with such outrageous acts of bloodshed, should be expected in a war as brutal psychologically as it is physically. But we, the Muslims of Qur’anic experience, should not let them get away with their shenanigans and trickery.

Now more than any other time, we must remember what Anas ibn al-Naḍr said when the enemies’ propaganda at Uḥud made its rounds and disheartened some of the Muslim fighters, “What are you going to do with life after Muhammad (ﷺ)? Take a stand and die for what he (ﷺ) died for.”<sup>296</sup>

### **Commitment Quality Dwells between Life and Death**

The conflict at Uḥud began with things going well for the Muslims, as the *mushriks* were being roundly eliminated. Sensing their rout, they began to withdraw, leaving behind valuables and war materiel. Their flag was struck down and one of their women had to come and raise it. On the Muslim side the fighters began to lose their grip on victory when they showed a failure of spirit: they ran after the loot, abandoning their positions. This caused dissension among the Muslim rank and file. About these developments the words of Allah (ﷻ) encapsulate facts,



And, in truth, Allah made good His promise to you, when by His mandate you were about to destroy your assailants — until the moment when you went wrong and acted contrary to the [Prophet’s] command, and disobeyed [Him] after He had brought you within view of that [victory] which you were anticipating. Some of you want worldly gains and some of you want other-worldly gains; whereupon in order that He might put you to a test, He prevented you from defeating your attackers. But now He has effaced your sin: for Allah is limitless in His bounty to those who are committed to Him [and His demonstration of power].

[Remember the time] when you fled, paying no heed to anyone, while at your rear the Apostle was calling out to you; wherefore He requited you with woe in return for [the Apostle’s] woe, so that you should not grieve [merely] over what had escaped you, nor over what had befallen you: for Allah is aware of all that you do.

Then, after this debacle, He sent down upon you a sense of security, a slumber of rest which engulfed some of you, whereas others, who cared mainly for themselves, entertained wrong thoughts about Allah — thoughts of the age of idiocracy — saying, “Did we, then, have any power of decision [in this matter]?” Say, “For certain, all power of decision does rest with Allah,” [but as for them], they are trying to conceal within themselves that [failing of commitment] which they would not reveal to you, [O Prophet, by] saying, “If we had any power of decision, we would not have left so many dead behind.”

Say [to them], “Even if you had remained in your homes, those [of you] whose death had been ordained would indeed have gone forth to the places where they were destined to lie down.” And [all this befell you] so that Allah might put to a test all that you hold inside of you, and render your innermost hearts pure of all

**dross — for Allah is aware of what is in the hearts [of men] (3:152–154).**

Immediately after Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) returned to Madinah, in the aftermath of the inconclusive military engagement at Uḥud, some his companions began to ask, “How could such a thing happen? Is it possible that we the Muslims can be less than triumphant in a war with the *mushriks* and *kāfirs*? Did not Allah (ﷻ) promise us victory and a successful end to our wars?” This human reaction invited a scriptural response from Allah (ﷻ), **“And, indeed, Allah made good His promise to you... there were among you those who wanted this world [and its war-booty],”** in reference to the archers who deserted their assigned tactical positions when they saw they could go down and collect some spoils of war from the fleeing *mushriks*.<sup>297</sup>

During the exchange of fire at Uḥud the Muslims experienced the human feeling of fear. When this fear entered into the ranks of the valiant Muslims they were overtaken by a sense of slumber — a dormant or quiescent state. Some of the Muslims stated the way they felt, saying, “If we had any power of decision we would not have suffered so many fatalities.” This feeling, expressed by Muslims at war with the *mushriks*, was mitigated by an engulfing state of serenity, relieving them of their fear, **“He sent down upon you a sense of freedom from anxiety or fear — a type of rest... for Allah is aware of all your inner feelings and thoughts.”**

There were real, committed Muslims, in a bloody war with scores of fatalities, saying to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), “If we had any power of decision, we would not have sustained so many casualties.” Expressing the same in 20th-century idiom, this would roughly sound like, “If it were up to us we would not have left our homes and ‘turf’ in Madinah and come all the way to Uḥud only to wind up being cut down on the battlefield. We were reluctant to leave; in a way, we were impelled to leave Madinah for Uḥud; it was not our choice.” In reply to this mood among the Muslim troops Allah (ﷻ) taught them, and us by extension, **“Even if you remained in your homes, those [of you] whose death had been decreed would**

indeed have proceeded to the locales where they were destined to lie down.” This means that those who were destined to die met the condition of that inevitable death by going to the venue of that established death. If death is so inevitable at a predetermined time, sitting at home is not going to deter that fated time from arriving. Allah’s (ﷻ) fiat pertaining to death is unavoidable; our staying at home is not going to deter or delay inevitable death.

The details of Uḥud show that Allah (ﷻ) was forthcoming and the militarily responsible Muslims were making tremendous headway during the first part of the battle. Allah’s (ﷻ) power became the Muslims’ power when they were serving Him strictly and sincerely. The *mushriks* were being cut down and thrown out by the advancing Muslim forces. And so Allah (ﷻ) made good on His word to offer the Muslims military success and the winning edge in the war. But then something happened: some Muslims betrayed concern for the material world to the exclusion of Allah (ﷻ) and obedience to His Messenger (ﷺ). Instead of fighting as one solid army, some of the troops broke rank and wanted to seize some worldly benefits. This meant the Muslims were no longer capable of implementing properly the orders their leader had given them. The archers were at the critical fault line that opened up into a fissure exploitable by the foe. These Muslim archers developed conflicting attitudes; some of them said, “Why are we still in our positions when the *mushriks* are in retreat and seem to have been defeated?” Others said, “But we should not leave our positions because if we do we would be disobeying the Prophet (ﷺ), and we will never do that.”<sup>298</sup> There were a few who honored their word and fulfilled the Prophet’s (ﷺ) order; among them was ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr. But these few were not enough; with the desertion of the others from their posts the damage was done. Victory slipped away and frustration replaced it.

To look at it from another angle: when the Muslims were united around the Prophet (ﷺ), fighting selflessly, they were on their way to success. But when the Muslims differed and disagreed, then Allah’s (ﷻ) victory, which is contingent upon obedience and steadfastness, was deferred. It should be noted that the demonstra-

tion of Allah's (ﷺ) comradeship is expressed most clearly in times of war and conflict. Muslims must draw lessons from this; they must realize that Allah (ﷻ) is true to them and will grant victory as long as they are with Him and are attached to Him at times when life and death hang in the balance.

For those who are wondering why Muslims should be unfocused or scattered, the answer comes from Allah (ﷻ), **“Some of you desire this world.”** In this context it means that some Muslims are more concerned with the spoils of war, the public trough, and the perks of winning. It is illustrative to note here that ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd said, “We never realized that any companions of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) would be so inclined toward worldly contentment until the day of Uḥud. They turned out to be those who gave up their positions on the mount and ran for the plunder.”<sup>299</sup>

This gives pause for thought to those in scholarly circles and their extensions all the way to the common man in the street, who are under the impression that all the people around the Prophet (ﷺ) were faultless or perfect. That is not the case, as this incident clearly shows.

As is to be expected, the Qur’an does not slight those who merit the highest rank of valor and virtue — the unwavering Muslims who stood their ground, fought beside Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), and were focused on the life to come, **“...likewise, among you there were those who desired the *ākhirah* [the life to come].”** A few of the archers also did not disobey the Prophet’s (ﷺ) instructions; they remained undeterred in their fighting positions with their commander, ‘Abdullāh ibn Jubayr. When these archers were abandoned by the other archers who rushed for the spoils, Khālid ibn al-Walīd and ‘Ikrimah ibn Abī Jahl, who were not Muslims at that time, noticed the opportunity and attacked, killing Ibn Jubayr and the Muslims who remained with him. The whole Islamic effort caved in because the *dunyā-seekers* gave in to their desire for material things, running after the items of earthly value.

It turned out that after the Muslims got onto a winning streak they diverted themselves onto a losing track. In a strictly military sense this was no victory; but in a disciplinary and social sense it

separated the committed from the less than committed. It demonstrated the quality of these combatants around the Prophet (ﷺ). And when all was said and done Allah (ﷻ) even forgave the bit of insubordinate human nature that failed in those men who brought about this reversal of fortune. Their evident noncompliance led to the disaster experienced by all, but when they showed remorse for their wayward behavior, Allah (ﷻ) was quick to forgive their failure. Allah (ﷻ) did not punish them for the serious mistake that cost many lives and even exposed Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) to danger of death. That is because they acknowledged their error and asked Allah (ﷻ) for pardon; and He responded in a way that helped them learn from their mistake.

Allah (ﷻ) then caused the *mushriks* to turn away from the Muslims in the heat of the battle as the Muslims themselves were running up Mount Uhud for cover and a better position from which to defend themselves. The Muslims were in fact in a real conundrum: they experienced the fear of being vanquished, the frustration of being trounced, and the horror of being wiped out. This left Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) exposed, endangered, and unprotected. From his dauntless courage, Muhammad (ﷺ) at this particularly difficult moment called on the fleeing Muslims to come back and fight with gallantry and valor, saying to them, “Come to me, subjects of Allah. Dependents of Allah! Come to me. I am Allah’s Rasūl. Whoever takes the initiative and goes on the offensive has secured paradise.” Ibn ‘Abbās and others related that the Prophet (ﷺ) called, “O subordinates of Allah, come back!”<sup>300</sup> He was calling them from the other end of their line of desertion; that is the meaning of “...while at your rear the Apostle was calling out to you.”

Undoubtedly, this sequence of events helped evaluate the military worth of men who all agreed to fight the *mushriks* when they met to discuss the war plan. First, it was the *munāfiqs* in the hundreds who withdrew from the whole affair and returned to Madi-nah. Then it was the marksmen who abandoned their positions when they thought the *mushriks* had been routed. These two “filters” served the purpose of measuring and assessing the types of people who claimed “Islamic citizenship” but could not keep company

with Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) when they had to face life-and-death choices. When it came to the worst moments of Uḥud, Muhammad (ﷺ) had only 12 men with him. Remarking upon this, the Qur'an's words are, **"...wherefore He repaid you with misery resulting from affliction in return for [the Apostle's] affliction."**

All of this may have been an exercise to build us up through our flaws, faults, and failings so that we will never repeat such behavior again. The Muslims also ended up building a tolerance for being denied the spoils of war when they were intent on getting them. Some were killed, others were injured, but that made the lesson even worthier. It is this level of commitment through action and sacrifice that will raise our status, facilitate our future diligence, and bring our actions to fruition.

After all that, Allah (ﷻ) responded to the frightened Muslims by engulfing them in an air of security and an aura of serenity. They were armed, equipped, and at full attention as military personnel are expected to be, yet in the presence of Allah's (ﷻ) engaged power they felt somnolent and tranquil. This may have been a very brief recuperating period after which they regained their resolve and redoubled their efforts. There is something here that has to be studied and analyzed in military history and combat clashes. It would be impossible for armies and militias that do not have Allah (ﷻ) on their side to even think about what is being discussed here. Military doctrines that do not include Allah's (ﷻ) power presence — the core around which *īmān* and *kufr* are polarized — cannot understand anything in this instance. But Muslims who are committed to Allah (ﷻ) all the way to the war front should concentrate on this dynamic, which no one known to this author factors into war plans and fighting strategies. This *nu'ās* (sleepiness and drowsiness) is also mentioned in *Sūrah al-Anfāl*, also within the context of military clashes, **"[Remember how it was] when He caused yawning and the wink of sleep to enfold you, as an assurance from Him" (8:11)**. Abū Ṭalḥāḥ said that he was one of those who was overwhelmed with slumber, and that it caused his sword to fall from his hand a few times. It would fall and he would pick it up; it would fall again and he would pick it up again.<sup>301</sup>

This trance would affect a portion of the Islamic armed forces, anywhere from one to many. In the composition of the army at Uḥud it may have been some from the Muhājirūn and some from the Anṣār. In any case it was certainly those who were so disciplined and so determined as to fight obediently to the finish; they were certain that Allah (ﷻ) was with His Prophet (ﷺ) and hence He was also with them.

### ***Munāfiqs* Are Outed When Muslims Go to War**

In any Muslim armed force there are also soldiers who suffer from the fear of being killed, and lack the confidence that comes from a conscience steeped in Allah (ﷻ). The Prophet (ﷺ) himself may not have inspired enough confidence in them. Such types were around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ); they were in the first line of *ṣalāh* in his *masjid*, and they were also conscripts in the Islamic armed forces. There were also the likes of ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy and Mu‘attib ibn Qushayr. The serious problem with recorded Islamic history here is that, try as one might, there is a brick wall in pinpointing the exact names of those who in their hundreds were the crowd of *munāfiqs* in Madinah. These were not the types who would be brought into the tranquillity of reassurance by a nap or light sleep; they could have cared less for the leadership of Muhammad (ﷺ) or the centrality and rightness of Islam. They entertained baseless *jāhili* thoughts about Allah (ﷻ) — their type always will. They are the ones who said, “If Muhammad were truly a prophet the *kāfirs* would never have been able to do what they did at Uḥud.”<sup>302</sup>

There was another category of human beings who went up to Muhammad (ﷺ), asking him, “Are we to share [a purported] victory and triumph?”<sup>303</sup> Inside of their own selves they figured all of this warring and fighting has no basis to begin with; so what victory is there to go round? They had miscalculated: the result of a prophet’s mission is calculated less by the end of one battle than by the end of the war.

Allah (ﷻ) answers them, saying in effect that everything in the theater of life happens in accordance and fulfillment of Allah’s

(ﷺ) natural and post-natural laws. Many of these natural laws can be identified by man's experiments and discoveries; but some of them, such as social laws, are to be detected or deduced from experience. Victory appears in the end-calculations of these natural and social factors. Allah (ﷻ) is the origin of these palpable and less-than-palpable laws. And if He says that He guarantees the victory of those who are committed to Him, then He will deliver and fulfill His word. With these elements in mind Allah (ﷻ) says, "[For] Allah has thus ordained: I shall most certainly prevail, I and My Apostles!" (58:21); and "Verily, Our hosts — they indeed — would [in the end] be victorious" (37:173).

These dual-loyalists hold a grudge against the Muslims of self-determination. Overtly they ask what appears to be an innocent question, "Do we have any power of decision?" But beneath this query is a pool of God-denial, misrepresentation, and hypocrisy. The Prophet (ﷺ) was telling them, "Verily, all power of decision rests with Allah." But within themselves to themselves they were saying, "Here is Muhammad claiming that all decision-making is Allah's with input from His dependents; they say they shall be militarily victorious, they will not be discomfited and conquered. See how many Muslims have been killed at Uḥud... There has to be a correlation between prophethood and triumph... so if Muhammad is really a prophet he would not have been defeated at Uḥud."<sup>304</sup> They could not come to terms with the convergence of laws that define victory as a divine outcome coming from Allah (ﷻ) while defeat is the result of Muslims' violating Allah's (ﷻ) laws and commands.

Allah (ﷻ) answers these *munāfiqs* by saying that a person's lifetime is a divine calculation and that triumph comes from Allah (ﷻ). Whosoever is projected and fated to die fighting will die fighting; and that same person would die at that same moment at the end of his lifetime in a mode other than fighting if that were how Allah (ﷻ) had prearranged for him to die.

The reason the Muslims were disappointed at Uḥud was to show them who is who amongst them; without a military encounter, bloodshed, and the life-and-death experience, it may well have been impossible to sort out the quality of Muslims around the Prophet



(ﷺ). Uḥud was a necessity in the way it unfolded. Nothing could bring out the deep-seated feelings, the innermost thoughts, and the elusive doubts in the minds of the individuals around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) like a battle, disagreement, and hostilities.

Those Muslims who abandoned the Prophet (ﷺ) even before they arrived at the war front exposed themselves as out-and-out dual-loyalists. Yet even among those exhibiting enough determination to go on to Uḥud and fight, there was a class of people who felt menaced and put at risk because of their ineluctable attachment to the material world. One thing led to another; in effect they deserted Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) when they abandoned their assigned positions; this led to the suspension of victory and the terrible losses the Muslims had to endure.

Unlike the dual-loyalists, who withdrew from the Muslim army on the way to Uḥud and who became a fifth column inside Madinah, these warriors at Uḥud who were tempted away from their positions were forgiven, **“But now Allah has amnestied them: truly, Allah is forgiving..”** They will not be held to account for this in the world to come, although they had to learn a painful lesson in this world. This also gave them hope to carry on with their future responsibilities. It is through such events that men are tested and evaluated. Uḥud was a testing-ground as well as a battleground. The lesson was traumatic but it was not futile.

Human nature thousands of years ago is still human nature today and will continue to be human nature until the end of time. Sometimes human beings tend to regard victory as some type of superior skill that comes naturally with being a committed Muslim. This leads to the assumption that victory should come automatically as long as people state their affirmation of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). They think they do not have to work, struggle, or sacrifice to gain victory as long as they are “Muslims.” They can “show up” for a war and from there on victory can be taken for granted. Yet the fact of the matter is that committed Muslims, just like other human beings, have to work, strive, struggle, and be exposed to risk in order to attain victory. Victory is neither effortless nor cheap. Once Muslims have carried their military burden

to their human limits they can hope for Allah (ﷻ) to be with them, but not before.

Allah (ﷻ) will fulfill His word and promise as long as the Muslims fight in a principled and disciplined manner, whatever the nature of the war around them is. This warfare does not permit cowardice, helplessness, division, feuds, or worldly priorities. At Uḥud, Allah (ﷻ) was engaged in the battle as long as the combatant Muslims were fighting in the manner approved by Him. Throughout the opening clashes of Uḥud, the Muslims felt confident of their victory over their enemies. The *mushrik* flag-bearer was killed, along with seven others. Yet this did the Muslims little good when their archers disobeyed orders. These deserters' psychological attachment to material gain led to mayhem among the other Muslim combatants, while the *mushriks* regrouped and charged again. The whole scenario was an almost complete betrayal of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) in the middle of the battle.

What might have seemed like "crazy" when those archers left their positions turned out to be a violation of "fighting for Allah (ﷻ)." And what began as a sure victory turned out to be a military setback. Allah (ﷻ) zeroes in on this critical development by saying, **"In order to test you, Allah prevented you from defeating your foes..."** The disobedience of the Muslims was used to teach them a lesson.

What saved the blameworthy Muslims was that they were not deliberately confrontational and defiant in their disobedience: they did not leave their positions in a manner that takes issue with Allah (ﷻ). They left simply because their "instinctive" selves, which wanted the loot, overwhelmed their disciplinary selves that should have kept them fixed in their positions. Probably it was for this reason that Allah (ﷻ) pardoned them. Had they tried to rationalize their disobedience they would have received a more severe chastisement from Allah (ﷻ). Committed Muslims who are quick to refer to Allah (ﷻ) in good faith and without malice will find Allah (ﷻ) to be lenient and forthcoming.

Of course it was not acceptable for the Muslims to run away from the battle when their commander was steadfast and resolute in

his fight against the *mushriks*. The Prophet (ﷺ) even called on them to return and fight on; when they did not come back Allah (ﷻ) penalized them by the sense of wretchedness that engulfed them. But for the Muslims who made a partial comeback, a sense of sleepiness overcame them; as sleep recharges the body, so this sleepiness recharged the Muslim army. This all happened to dedicated Muslims who were neither *munāfiqs* nor of malicious, rebellious intent.

Once again it took a war to shed light on those who are dual and multiple loyalists. They were the ones who thought that the tide of events would justify their mutinous behavior, saying, **“Had we the power of decision we would not have been killed at this place.”** Even in the way they express themselves they shield their true identities, **“...we would not have been killed...”** as if they actually belonged to the Muslim fighting force. Allah (ﷻ) responded by saying, **“In fact, all decision-making belongs to Allah.”** Allah (ﷻ) grants and withholds victory in accordance with His will. Lifetimes and lifespans are a predetermined length of time decreed by Allah (ﷻ). Everyone who dies does so because their precalculated time on earth is over. The triggering mechanism for the act of dying may be the result of a shrapnel wound at the war front or the result of a heart attack in the bedroom or garden.

In the end after the battle of Uḥūd was over, the Muslims were of two opinions,

1. one group held that, after taking all the battle’s developments into consideration and after looking at all that happened, they had lost their victory because of their own shortcomings and failings. They were conscious of the fact that Allah (ﷻ) promises and delivers victory. And because of the discrepancy between what Allah (ﷻ) had promised them and what they themselves were guilty of, they asked Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness and He forgave them.
2. the other group was influenced by fear and terror. Nothing else meant anything to them — it was all dread and panic. They were not able to have confidence in Allah’s (ﷻ) promise; nor were they convinced of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) leadership and authority.

There is a deep meaning embedded in the details of Uḥud. The Muslims at the battlefield had been deserted by the out-and-out dual-loyalists (*munāfiqs*). It was the above-average Muslims who were left to face a materially superior *mushrik* army from Makkah. When the two sides engaged, the Muslims had to fight their psychological selves, by suppressing their materialistic or satanic desires, and they had to fight their social selves, by carrying arms against their relatives and compatriots. It was proven through this fighting on two fronts that combatant Muslims are very vulnerable when they do poorly on their psychological front. That is why, when they caved in to their internal desire to grab the material spoils of war, their “previous” selves — the society from which they were extracted into the new horizons of Islam — caused them to fight a defensive war.

The Prophet’s (ﷺ) generation during the Prophet’s (ﷺ) time betrayed their divergent priorities. Some of them wanted to get their share of the spoils and others wanted to remain fixed in the positions assigned to them by Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). As arrows were flying, swords were flashing, and blood was flowing, they argued among themselves about what to do: hurry to claim the spoils, or hold position, keeping guard against a vicious enemy who seems to be defeated, but is not going away. When these two trends became divergent military behaviors, the unity of the Muslim army was shattered. The objective was no longer one objective. And all of this happened when the Muslims were winning! When the Muslims fight, they fight for Allah (ﷻ) — *fi sabilillāh*; but what happened at Uḥud was not *fi sabilillāh*. When there is a cleavage in the internal Muslim psychology, which is expected to be altogether bound to Allah (ﷻ), at that moment Muslims will always lose their edge against their enemy because Allah (ﷻ) will no longer be necessarily part of that military encounter on the side of the committed Muslims; and the worldly odds will take over.

The lesson here is that committed Muslims should always be conscious of the fact that when they go to war they are going for Allah (ﷻ); that when they are physically fighting they are doing so while Allah (ﷻ) is on their side; and that when they keep their

unity and unanimity they honor their effort by securing Allah (ﷻ) on their side. Drifting away from this is tantamount to breaking away from Allah (ﷻ). And at Uḥud it was not Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) who broke away from Allah (ﷻ), but only most of the archers; and yet that seemingly minor dereliction was responsible for outright victory slipping away from the Muslims.

And because all of this happened to a Muslim armed force, today’s Muslims are expected to apply its meanings to their armed forces with diligence and attention. Most of the armies in Muslim countries today do not have military manuals that teach Muslim fighting forces these precious lessons.

Were all the *munāfiqs* the ones who deserted the Muslim army on the way to Uḥud? Think again. Within the army there was a group that was described in Allah’s (ﷻ) words, **“Others, who cared mainly for themselves, entertained wrong thoughts about Allah — thoughts belonging to the time of *jāhiliyah* — saying, ‘Did we, then, have any power of decision [in this matter]?’”** Instead of humbly allowing Allah (ﷻ) to permeate their minds and sink into their hearts, so that whatever they would do is conditioned by a consciousness of Allah (ﷻ), they went out there on the battlefield with a view to running the whole affair according to their desires. They came out looking confused and then figured they had been forced into battle. They had no say about where they were and what they were doing. And then they had the nerve to ask why they, of all people, were exposed to this misfortune when the tide of war was turning against the Prophet (ﷺ) and everyone who was with him, including themselves. They reckoned they were paying a disproportionate price for virtually no benefit or profitable return.

These are the types of ideas that go through minds that do not know Allah (ﷻ). People who know Allah (ﷻ) better would not have been analyzing the battle in this manner. As for this group of *munāfiqs* within the Muslim ranks, their conclusion was that Allah (ﷻ) had turned them into “sitting ducks.” These may have been the band that wanted to go back to Madinah with Ibn Ubayy but were so confused and unsettled that they followed the Prophet (ﷺ)

to Uḥud. They said they believed in Allah's Prophet (ﷺ); but when he made a decision of this magnitude, even though he had consulted his companions, they reversed course, saying the decision was not theirs. If the Prophet (ﷺ) was theirs, how can his decision not be theirs? But this is what happens when people want to superimpose their prejudices and preconceptions on events. These types could not even wait until the mental dust settled so that they could see the whole picture. This affair and this decision about Uḥud was done via *shūrā* and was executed by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the company of Allah (ﷻ) and the Muslim public. Everything here was transparent; these whiners and malcontents had no basis for expressing their disagreement with the war when the Muslims seemed to be losing because of their failure to obey and cooperate.

And this is only scratching the surface. The inner psychological reality of these mischief-makers is flagged by Allah's (ﷻ) words, **"...they are trying to conceal within themselves that [aversion to divine commitment] which they would not disclose to you."** Deep inside their own selves is a world of smoke and mirrors, a life that bends facts to suit its own self-interest, and a knack for rationalization that shows no respect for Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger. They want the rest of the people to feel that they are the victims of the Prophet's (ﷺ) mismanagement and incompetence; according to them, had they been calling the shots, Uḥud would not have been a fiasco. They claimed that if they had been in command there would not have been so many casualties; they could have saved some lives. It is very hard to explain to these types of people the fact that we humans are dying from the time we are born. Sometimes that lifetime is short and at other times it is long, but the death-date of each human being has been determined by Allah (ﷻ). This issue of "saving lives" on the battlefield comes from a psychology and a mentality that has not been fashioned by the *ḥikmah* that comes from Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). To this mentality Allah (ﷻ) says, **"So that Allah may verify all that you harbor in your bosoms, and render your innermost hearts pure of all dross; for Allah is aware of what is in the hearts [of men]."**

This *āyah* means that Allah (ﷻ) is privy to the sub-Islamic locus of attitudes and intentions that run contrary to Islamic behavior, Islamic leadership, and Islamic autonomy. If these dual-loyalists had their way they would never be put in a position that would expose their perfidy and deceit. And that is exactly what the troublesome turn of events at Uḥud did: it displayed these *munāfiqs*’ inclination to treason, their latent faithlessness, and their hidden disloyalty. There is nothing else in life that can bring out the true character and identity of a dual-loyalist better than for him to go all the way to the war zone, where events will prove his worth and mettle, “**...For Allah is aware of what is in the bosoms [of men].**” Allah (ﷻ) is keenly aware of their treacherous and insidious nature — and they demonstrate their true selves when the instruments of death take their course. Once they disobeyed they began to run away because they could not keep company with Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) any longer. In this way they distanced themselves from Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) and when they did that they inadvertently invited Satan to lead them,

Behold, as for those who abandoned [their military duties] on the day when the two armies met in battle, Satan caused them to stumble only by means of something they [themselves] had done. But now Allah has pardoned them... (3:155).

### Fear of Death Is Not an Excuse for Shirking Military Duty

O you who are firmly committed to Allah! Be not like those who reject Allah [and His power manifestation] and say of their brethren [who die] after they set out on a journey to faraway places or go forth to war, “Had they but remained with us, they would not have died,” or “they would not have been killed;” for Allah will cause such thoughts to become a source of bitter regret in their hearts, since it is Allah who grants life and deals death. And Allah sees all that you do.

**And if indeed you are killed or die in Allah's cause, then surely forgiveness from Allah and His grace are better than all that one could amass [in this world]: for, indeed, if you die or are killed, it will surely be to Allah that you shall be gathered together (3:156–158).**

Internal thoughts that are planted by Satan are as destructive as social propaganda that comes from the same source but is reinforced and pedaled by dual-loyalists. There is a convergence of concepts between enemy propaganda and dual-loyalist disinformation that is spread for the purpose of obscuring Allah's (ﷻ) power and authority in human societies. Both these mindsets converge on the hearsay that fallen warriors, martyrs, and travellers would not have died had they not ventured into such acts. Allah (ﷻ) here is instructing His committed dependents not to utter such nonsense.

If someone dies while on a journey or while fighting, then they do so because their allotted time has ended. It is not the injury incurred while fighting or unforeseen disaster while on a journey that causes death, although death may have its “partial explanation” in precipitating triggers such as a “bullet wound,” “internal hemorrhaging,” “falling off a cliff,” “hypothermia,” etc. The external and internal psychological warfare against the committed Muslims is geared to deter them from military service by pointing to the “cause of death” but not pointing to the expiration of life. These enemies would say something like, “Had these fallen soldiers remained at home they would not have died,” or “Had they stayed with us they still would have been alive.” No one has ever lived past his allotted span simply by staying at home or keeping company with double-tongued and two-faced *munāfiqs*. Such obfuscations come from reactionary and apologetic opponents of the committed Muslims. This type of statement betrays an ignorance of Islam and a deviation away from complying with the Will of Allah (ﷻ) and committing to His cause. Any Muslim knows that the initiation of life and the culmination of death are divine matters. No human being has a personal input into the origination of a life or into its



direct termination, **“And no living being can die save by Allah’s leave, at a term preordained” (3:145).**

Materialistic, worldly modes of thought are unable to accept this reality. They have fashioned their thoughts in a way that makes “birth” and “death” somewhat arbitrary and to some extent coincidental. This is what happens to our precious God-given minds when we choose not to think about and focus on the meticulous presence of Allah (ﷻ) with every living being, which should logically and naturally culminate in Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence at the level of human endeavor and social construction. Allah (ﷻ) says that He initiates life and He deals death. That duration, endurance, and continuance in time is controlled utterly and directly by Allah (ﷻ) alone; no human can affect this formula of life in any way.

In this larger picture, dying for the cause of Allah (ﷻ) or just passing on becomes an instrument by which we human beings can gain Allah’s (ﷻ) mercy and forgiveness. Pursuing this becomes better than anything else available to man in this world. Nothing can vaguely match the reward of passing on to Allah (ﷻ) willingly. What is there in this life that can substitute for heaven and paradise, for bliss and exaltation?

These words of the blind leading the blind could have been uttered by the *munāfiqs* who defected from the Islamic army on the way to Uḥud. They also echoed the ideas and sentiments of the *mushriks* who were in Madinah at that time and who were not yet Muslims. It was easy for them in the hard times that followed Uḥud to make a fuss about those who were killed at Uḥud. The issue of war casualties is a sensitive one in any society. All families who lose someone in war will be susceptible to misguidance and sophistry. This could potentially erode the camaraderie and brotherhood characteristic of an Islamic society. The issue is so sensitive that Allah (ﷻ) had to reveal these soothing words to put the issue to rest before it became a destructive one.

**“If they [the war casualties] were with us they would not have died nor would they have been killed.”** This statement by the *mushriks* and dual-loyalists is both a perversion and an indoctrination. Anyone who repeats and believes such an idea places

himself at odds with the way committed Muslims understand this matter. The ups and downs of life are operated and governed by *sunan* (social laws that work according to Allah's (ﷻ) will). An experienced and thinking Muslim knows and is familiar with Allah's (ﷻ) will; he knows that whatever happens to him happens by this Will of Allah (ﷻ). Nothing can come about without the involvement of Allah (ﷻ). So, in this instance, when a Muslim army sets out after observing all the instructions revealed by Allah (ﷻ), and it conscientiously discharges all its obligations, then whatever may happen after that is going to happen simply the way Allah (ﷻ) wants it to happen. Man can do his utmost to satisfy the conditions, terms, morals, values, legality, and strategy extracted from the Qur'an and Sunnah. And after that the results are what Allah (ﷻ) decides they should be. This reliance upon Allah (ﷻ) leaves no room for "if only I had done that" or "it would have been better to do it another way" or "I wish we knew about that then" or the like.

Muslims should never be like the *kāfirs*, who feel the world has come to an end when one of their's dies while traveling or fighting,

**O you who are committed to Allah! Do not be like those who reject Allah [and His power presence] and who say of their brethren after they set out on a journey to remote places or are on military missions, "Had they but remained with us, they would not have died," or, "they would not have been killed" (3:156).**

These types are not short of words: they will talk and talk. They may not know it, but committed Muslims can identify them immediately. And such people turn their psychology against their own selves, "...for Allah will cause such thoughts to become a source of bitter regret in their hearts." This happens to all peoples who are "hung up" on apparent causes and fail to see Allah's (ﷻ) hand and will at work. This psychology of "regretting death" can turn into many pathetic and pathological problems for the societies in which these people live. They cannot take Allah's (ﷻ) will with

comfort and confidence and abide by His words, “...we are Allah’s and to Him will we return” (2:156). Over and over again Allah (ﷻ) in His book reminds us humans that it is He who grants life and deals death. Allah (ﷻ) sets life into motion and brings it to an end; it does not matter where a person is or what he is doing at that fateful time.

Although the events of Uḥud illustrate these meanings, they are also relevant to the nature of human life and human society everywhere, on all occasions. True, at times of war the issue of death is more pronounced, more tangible, and more immediate, but death is an everyday affair, a part of life. It is always happening, and yet it is almost the least discussed subject around — especially when worldly people are predominant in society.

Death is not everything; it is not the end of anything. When someone dies or is killed, that person’s existence does not end. This earthly life is not the best thing that Allah (ﷻ) gives a human. In the sight of Allah (ﷻ) there is a merit that far exceeds the biological survival of a human being; as He says,

**And if you are killed or die in Allah’s cause, then surely forgiveness from Allah and His grace are better than all that one could amass [in this world]; for, indeed, if you die or are killed, it will surely be to Allah that you shall be assembled (3:157–158).**

This makes dying for Allah (ﷻ) better than life itself, provided that death meets the standards, qualifications, and conditions of striving for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). Nothing can match this “violent” or “non-violent” death, defending, promoting, and enhancing the cause of Allah (ﷻ) — absolutely nothing. No money or fortune, no status or esteem, and no power or influence can come close to the reward of expiring while standing up for Allah (ﷻ). The compensation for passing on to Allah (ﷻ) in such a manner is Allah’s (ﷻ) acquittal and absolution. These privileges in the life to come are beyond anything anyone can gain in this material world and existence.

Every human being is approaching his final moment on earth; whatever the immediate cause of death, we are all reverting to our Creator and Maker. From the moment of conception each of us is on the road to death. Realistically speaking, only an unbalanced or demented person will spend all of his life without preparing for the transition into eternal life. The fact that defies all the knowledge and experience of the material world is that we are all going to be brought back and gathered together in the presence of Allah (ﷻ).

So even if there are mounting fatalities at the war front, and even if the Muslims are routinely dying while on a course to Allah (ﷻ), there is nothing to worry about: they have gone on to a better place. Muslims are required to demonstrate their character when it comes to life-and-death issues. Muslims have a particular and unmatched responsibility. Their relationship with Allah (ﷻ) is privileged and unique. He will take care of them as long as they live up to their responsibilities and duties. Muslims cannot afford to have a worldly psychology seep into their fighting ranks, nor into their family units. It is essential to display an authentic and genuine affinity with death. Death is nothing to be scared of — especially when man knows he is on a journey to Allah (ﷻ).

It is terribly wrong for a Muslim or for an Islamic public to think or say that if someone had not fought he would still have been alive. The *kāfirs* and *mushriks* do express such ideas and comments, but not the Muslims. Jihad (struggle) and *qitāl* (warfare) will cost the Islamic military fatalities and injuries, but life is better for those who die and life is better for those who survive. In both instances, for all the Muslims and for all humanity, life becomes better. Deterrence from jihad will never improve the quality of Muslims' lives. Not everyone who goes to war will fall: the readiness is all that is expected. Whoever dies and how is decided by Allah (ﷻ), well and efficiently: the Muslims' part is to honor their word with Him.

## Shūrā Is Not “Islamic” Democracy

- (3:159) And it was by Allah’s grace that you [O Prophet] dealt gently with your adherents, for if you had been harsh and hard of heart, they would indeed have broken away from you. Pardon them, then, and pray that they be forgiven. And take counsel with them in all matters of public concern; then, when you have decided upon a course of action, place your trust in Allah, for, of certainty, Allah loves those who place their trust in Him.
- (3:160) If Allah supports you, none can ever overcome you; but if He should forsake you, who could support you thenceforth? In Allah, then, let the committed Muslims place their trust.
- (3:161) And it is not conceivable that a prophet should deceive [in military affairs or in anything else], since he who deceives shall be faced with his deceit on the Day of Resurrection, when every human being shall be repaid in full for whatever he has done, and none shall be wronged [by any injustice].
- (3:162) Is then he who strives after Allah’s goodly acceptance like the one who has earned Allah’s condemnation and whose target is Hell? And how vile a journey’s end!
- (3:163) They are on [entirely] different levels in the sight of Allah; for Allah sees all that they do.
- (3:164) Indeed, Allah bestowed a favor upon the committed Muslims when He raised up in their midst an apostle from among themselves, to convey His messages to them, and to cause them to grow in purity, and to impart unto them the divine Writ as well as wisdom — whereas before that they were indeed, most obviously, lost in error.
- (3:165) And do you, now that a disaster has befallen you after you had inflicted twice as much [on your foes], ask yourselves, “How did this happen?” Say, “It has happened because of your own selves.” Verily, Allah has the power to will anything.

فِيمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ  
حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ  
فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا  
غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرْكُم مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى  
اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يُغْلَ وَمَنْ يُغْلُ يَأْتِ  
بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا  
يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾ أَفَمِنَ أَتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ  
وَمَا أَوْلَاهُ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾ هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ  
بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا  
مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ  
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾ أَوْلَمَّا  
أَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ  
أَنفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى  
الْجَمْعَانِ فَيَاذَنْ لِلَّهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ  
لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا فَنَتَلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا

لَا تَتَّبِعَنَّكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكُفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ  
 بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا  
 لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ  
 الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

- (3:166) And all that befell you on the day when the two hosts met in battle happened by Allah’s leave, so that He would mark out [for you] those who were securely committed [to Allah],
- (3:167) And so that [He] would mark out those who were tainted with dual allegiances and, when they were told, “Come, fight in Allah’s cause” or “Defend yourselves,” they answered, “If we had known [that it would come to a] fight, we would have indeed followed you.” They were closer to denying Allah, on that day, than they were to affirming Him, uttering with their mouths something which was not in their hearts, the while Allah knew full well what they were trying to hide,
- (3:168) They who, holding themselves back [from fighting, later] said of their [fallen] brethren, “Had they but paid heed to us, they would not have been killed.” Say, “Then avert death from yourselves, if what you say is true!” (Āl ‘Imrān:159-168)

In times of war nerves flare up, people are tense, and war operations can be enough to drive a person insane. Notice that Allah (ﷻ) cautioned the Muslim foot soldier not to be deceived by what the hypocritical dual-loyalists were promoting. Before that, He said He had pardoned the developing, but as yet still immature Muslim sol-

diers, some of whom were still instinctively materialistic. And as Allah's (ﷺ) living words were pointing to the divergent inclinations of the Islamic military personnel, **"...some of you desire the [material] world and some of you desire the afterlife,"** the stress and pressure of the conditions on the ground were more than an average human being could cope with. But these *āyāt* paint a calm and accommodating picture of the commander-in-chief, the highest ranking and the supreme leader of the Muslims: Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ). Despite the unsettling situation, he was a tranquil and friendly administrator. With all of these failing and "not up-to-the-mark" human beings around, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) was gentle, good-natured, and tactful. He would address the Muslim troops in an affectionate, brotherly tone. Beyond that he wanted them to be involved in making their own decisions and building their own future. He showed how capable he was by being a transparent and honest leader. What else could one expect from the one who is described in the Qur'an as **"...a mercy to all mankind?"** Allah's (ﷺ) words reiterate, **"...for, behold, you [O Muhammad] keep indeed to a sublime way of life" (68:4).**

It was by virtue of Allah's (ﷺ) mercy that His Prophet (ﷺ) was mild, compassionate, and dignified at the same time. He acknowledged the deficiencies of human nature and the way human nature expresses itself in a war zone. Some military high brass would have acted with "military justice," court-martialed deserters, and probably executed a few to make an example out of them. But these were first-time offenders and many of them showed a lack of military discipline not out of treachery but simply because of their own lack of commitment, inexperience, and miscalculation. It takes a big heart to understand these circumstances and not to react in proportion to the adversity that was generated by their misbehavior and lethal mistakes. But Muhammad (ﷺ) was one of them, in the sense that he wanted to help them improve themselves; he did not want their faults to exclude them from his struggle. The inherently disquieting nature of war, especially when one is losing, gives us an enriched understanding of Allah's (ﷺ) words when He says,



**Indeed, there has come unto you [O mankind] an Apostle from within yourselves: heavily weighs upon him [the thought] that you might suffer [in the life to come], full of concern for you [is he, and] full of compassion and mercy toward the committed Muslims (9:128).**

This *āyah* has to be put into perspective. It was revealed during a military campaign that witnessed a reversal of physical and material fortunes for the Muslims — even though its essential and more universal meanings are not contained by that situation. Things seemed to go wrong from the time the *munāfiqs* walked out on the Islamic armed forces and returned to Madinah to the time when the archers abandoned their positions in pursuit of the booty. This incremental “falling apart” of the Islamic armed forces would have been enough to annoy, disappoint, and thwart any other commander, leader, or decision-maker at the helm of a military force. Human nature is prone to becoming heavy-handed, disagreeable, and caustic when people are undisciplined or lack conviction. But Muhammad (ﷺ) shone with an outstanding character and unparalleled behavior throughout the ordeal of Uḥud. He showed his helpers and comrades how to excuse human behavior when restive human attitude inadvertently disobeys a divine order. He demonstrated in real life how not to be psychologically or physically consumed by unstructured human error. He even went further and asked Allah (ﷻ) to forgive the Muslims, who in the future might become excellent fighters if they took stock of themselves and learned from their errors. All of this he did after involving these same less-than-disciplined Muslim fighters in the decision-making process that took place before he embarked on the military campaign of Uḥud.

He set the precedent for all decision-makers to include the general public in formulating critical military, social, and political decisions. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) set the standard for consulting his disciples and devotees whenever a difficult and general decision had to be made. Effective public policy cannot be made without the involvement of that same public. In this manner people feel a sense of ownership about their future and realize that a vital decision per-

taining to their public life was made not by someone sequestered in high office alone, but was made with their active input. And if this process of requiring people to participate in making their own military, political, economic, and social decisions is binding on Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), it is even more so on other commanders and leaders. Imam al-Hasan said that Allah (ﷻ) knew His Prophet (ﷺ) might not be in need of his followers' opinions, but this consultation by the Prophet (ﷺ) was done to set a precedent for the leaders who would succeed him.<sup>305</sup> No leader should ever regret the solicitation of public opinion concerning public affairs.

Now that the subject of *shūrā* (mutual consultation) is on the table, consider the following cases in which Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) is known to have conferred with and asked for advice from the Muslim public,

1. He sought out their opinion on the day of Badr about whether they should aim at the commercial caravan that was on its way from Damascus to Makkah. This amounted to a solicitation of the public's opinion about whether to take the initiative and seek redress for the confiscated wealth and property rights violations committed by Makkah's commercial class against the Muslims who were forced to migrate to Madinah virtually empty-handed, leaving behind their homes and other assets. The collective answer was, "O Messenger of Allah! If you were to take us out to the middle of the ocean we would go with you... and if you were to take us on a laborious journey we would join you. We will not answer you in the same fashion that Mūsá's people answered him when they said, '**Go forth you and your Lord and do the fighting, for we shall remain here [stationary and sitting]!**' Rather we say [to you O Prophet], '**Go forth! For we are with you and by you — we will be on your right and left flanks; and we will be fighting.**'"<sup>306</sup>
2. In Badr also, he asked them where he should be positioned among them as they proceeded to war. Al-Mundhir ibn 'Amr suggested that he be in the front of the army.<sup>307</sup>
3. Before the Battle of Uḥud, he asked them whether the Muslim army should stay in Madinah or go out beyond Madinah to

- fight the *mushriks* of Makkah. The majority voted for taking on the enemy outside of Madinah, and he agreed.
4. On the Day of the Trench (Yawm al-Khandaq) he consulted with the Anṣār on whether it would be acceptable and feasible for them to relinquish one-third of Madinah’s produce for that year in return for neutralizing some of the factions that were aligned with Quraysh and its allies, all of whom had besieged Madinah. Sa’d ibn Mu‘ādh and Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādaḥ, the two prominent “Sa’d’s” of Madinah, refused this “disarming” tactic, so the Prophet (ﷺ) gave up the idea.<sup>308</sup>
  5. On the day of Ḥudaybiyah, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked the people’s opinion about taking on the *mushriks* who had taken ‘Uthmān hostage and were adamant about not letting the Muslims enter Makkah. He was answered by Abū Bakr, whose statement seems to have represented the public sentiment, “But our intention in coming here was not to wage war. We are making an effort to go to Makkah.” And the Prophet (ﷺ) did not take issue with this inclination to not wage war at that time.<sup>309</sup>
  6. The Prophet’s (ﷺ) situation was so much in the public eye that he discussed with ‘Alī and Usāmaḥ the question of separating from Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah; this was during the affair of the necklace and the resultant scandalmongering.<sup>310</sup>

All of these precedents were set to help future Muslims understand and then put into practice what is now known as *shūrā*. There are other aspects to this central issue in Muslim public life. In the first instance it recognizes and appreciates the input of those who are responsible and express themselves on such issues when they are placed in the public realm for feedback and input. The issue itself, whether it is one of war or social policy or any other matter, is viewed from different perspectives and analyzed from a variety of angles. The discussions and debates may enrich the choices and result in a decision that is much more informed than if it had remained within closed circles or limited personnel. *Shūrā* also helps consolidate public opinion because everyone is given the

opportunity to contribute to the final decision, so that once this final decision is made everyone feels they have actually participated in that decision, whatever it turns out to be.

**“And take counsel with them in all matters of public concern; then, when you have decided on a course of action, place your trust in Allah.”** This means that after the public has been queried for its evaluation and input, and after synergy has been created on a uniform course of action that takes into consideration the way most people think and feel about it, at that time the leaders and the led are required to go ahead with the final decision and place their collective confidence and reliance in Allah (ﷻ). After this is done and the entire social unit has unflinching confidence in Allah (ﷻ), then it will find that Allah (ﷻ) praises those who are dependent upon Him in this way. Now after all this is meticulously and conscientiously done Muslims may expect the results to come “custom-tailored” by the Will of Allah (ﷻ). Notice that placing confidence in Allah (ﷻ) came after exhausting a process. Confidence in Allah (ﷻ) did not come by invoking a verbal *du‘ā’* or by theoretically building an Islamic character or educating for decades or centuries an unfinished generation. Confidence in Allah (ﷻ) came through — in this case — a military campaign with all its shortfalls, mistakes, and human disinclinations away from Allah (ﷻ). *Shūrā* is an indirect way of saying that leaders need their people’s perceptions, persuasions, and participation.

This confidence in Allah (ﷻ) does not preclude human action inasmuch as it is a result of human action, involvement, and interaction. In the climate of politics and war this engagement places Muslims in a state of vigilance and preparation on par with their rivals, **“O you who are [militarily] committed to Allah! Be fully prepared against danger, whether you go to war in small legions or in all-out mobilization” (4:71), and “So gear up against them whatever force and war mounts you are able to summon” (8:60).** Thus it is activity and preparation coupled with supplication that inspires confidence in Allah’s (ﷻ) forthcoming help and victory.

But this confidence in Allah (ﷻ) will not be a fact of life when Muslims are satisfied with Allah (ﷻ) being less than a real,

practical, and timely power that eclipses, diminishes, and ruins all other worldly powers that are opposed to Him. When committed and combatant Muslims elevate Allah (ﷻ) in their conscience and in their sense of right and wrong to being the ultimate, decisive, and overwhelming power in the affairs of man, then they have gained the core ingredient that generates confidence in Allah (ﷻ). And the self-actualization of this confidence comes through the unfolding of challenges and confrontations, **“And make provision for yourselves, but, verily, the best of all provisions is *taqwá* [the human feeling of defense against Allah’s corrective power]” (2:197).** Allah’s (ﷻ) assurance is a consequence of man’s toiling for Allah (ﷻ). As much is understood from the following hadith, *“If you have total and absolute confidence in Allah He will provide for you as He does for birds who fly out on an empty stomach and fly back on a full stomach.”*<sup>311</sup>

### The Prophet’s (ﷺ) Disposition as a Model Leader

One of the characteristics of a prophet, it would seem from these *āyāt*, is a magnetic personality. A prophet cannot be repulsive or disagreeable; he has to be accommodating of human weakness and blunders. It is by Allah’s (ﷻ) mercy that Muhammad (ﷺ) had this engaging personality. He was instructed by Allah (ﷻ) to abide by *shūrā*, even when *shūrā* had damaging consequences. After *shūrā* was done, he showed determination and an unbending will to go ahead and accomplish the task at hand.

As with any “town meeting” there are going to be different interpretations, a variety of opinions, and unbending attitudes regardless of what others may think. When Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) summoned the people of Madinah to decide what to do and how to defend Madinah against the *mushriks* who were on their way from Makkah, there emerged two divergent opinions as the deliberation was in progress. Some people felt very strongly about leaving Madinah and taking on the enemy in the countryside. The other opinion preferred to fight from within Madinah where knowledge of the city would be useful in employing *guerilla tactics* and *urban warfare*.<sup>312</sup> It

turned out that most of the Muslims wanted to go away from Madinah and fight a “conventional war.” And even though this opinion was adverse to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) best judgement, he decided to fight the battle at a distance from Madinah.

The painful result was that about one-third of the Muslim army decided not to fight; instead, on the way to Uḥud, they deserted and returned to Madinah. This in any military dictionary is considered to be *mutiny*.<sup>313</sup> The events of the battle of Uḥud were enough to cause a moral meltdown as the Muslim archers left their positions to grab the spoils of war. And to add dismay to discontent, the rumor that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed became a source of grief and despair for the rest of the Muslim army. At this moment everyone seemed to be fleeing instead of defending their positions and dying in the line of duty. At the end of this sequence of psychological decline and military deterioration the Prophet (ﷺ) was left in the company of a handful of supporters, exposed to the firepower of the *mushriks*. He was isolated, fighting off waves of aggressors, and calling on the running Muslims to come back. In this situation Allah’s (ﷻ) words sooth the heart and charge the will. These calming and uplifting words were meant for Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) and for the Muslims around him. The Muslims are reminded of the heart their Prophet has (ﷻ), as well as the compassion he has for their failures and misgivings.

With the “benefits” of hindsight any “rational” leader would annul the process of *shūrā* because of the bitter results of Uḥud, but not a leader who has an understanding of human nature, looking toward its future potential rather than at its immediate dereliction of duty. Within the context of this set of military reversals, Allah’s (ﷻ) words can be better appreciated, **“Rather it is due to Allah’s mercy that you [O Muhammad] are lenient with them; for had you been furious they [the Muslims] would have parted from you [and left you].”**

Had the Prophet (ﷺ) shown himself to be a harsh and heavy-handed leader in times such as Uḥud, there would not have been people around him who were more concerned with being attached to him than with saving themselves. A true leader is one who is able

to motivate and inspire his followers after they have been devastated militarily. The foot-soldier Muslims had been weak and ignorant; they needed someone who would accept them and show them love and care regardless of their “natural” weaknesses. It takes a leader of the caliber of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) to give them his support when he is scarcely receiving any from them. He carried their burden when they wanted to travel lightly. He was a man of compassion, love, and concern on the home front, before being a man of ferocity, strength, and militancy at the war front. This does not mean that he had to be one or the other at all times and in all places. Life is a myriad of activities and responsibilities; some of them require our emotions and others our minds. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) showed us from his smile at home to his sternness in war that all human activities can be performed with grace and balance, seamliness and goodwill. Those who knew him and spoke about him said that he was never distressed or vexed about a personal matter. And what can be more of a test than the life-and-death moments of war; at the Battle of Uḥud, Muhammad (ﷺ) was not made a “nervous wreck” by human weaknesses and failings. People who spent time with Muhammad (ﷺ) and came to know him personally would admire and honor his high moral caliber as well as his emotional transcendence.

Throughout the most life-threatening moments of the battle, Muhammad (ﷺ) was in the forefront engaging the enemy. He was not a general sitting in a safe place while issuing orders to subordinate troops in the field. Muhammad (ﷺ) himself was in the army, physically at the front lines, and one of the troops. Today’s warfare is very remote. Commanders may be thousands of miles away, and they could care less if some troops have to die in order to accomplish the mission. Some generals in our era will look at the remains of their soldiers and shrug them off as something that is part of the nature of war. Muhammad (ﷺ), though, was the paragon of mercy. He cared, he shared, and was fair in every regard.

**And due to Allah’s mercy you accommodate them for had you been harsh and dense at heart they would have abandoned you. So forgive them and ask [Allah]**

**to pardon them, and consult with them; and once you decide place your trust in Allah, for Allah adores those who trust in Him (3:159).**

Recall all the details that preceded Uḥud, accompanied Uḥud, and followed Uḥud. Recall the egos, the differences of opinion, the defections, the doubts and uncertainties expressed by some, the marksmen abandoning their positions, some Muslim troops running away from Uḥud, the glitter of gold and its effect on some, and the susceptibility of some Muslims to rumors and propaganda. Remember all that and remember that Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) did not blame anyone for what came to pass. He did not court-martial anyone. He was concerned with pressing ahead with his responsibilities and their responsibilities. He wanted the Islamic army to move on and not to cave in to the enemy.

At the end of Uḥud the Muslims showed more determination and more backbone than at any other time. They drove a wedge of fear into their enemies who had to retreat to preserve a semblance of victory. The kind-heartedness of the Prophet (ﷺ) as commander-in-chief was his amnesty of those who deserved to be court-martialed. He even asked Allah (ﷻ) to forgive their offenses. His overwhelming prophetic grace demonstrated that *shūrā* did not contribute to the debacle at Uḥud; that some troops disobeyed orders was what led to the fiasco. Muslims were meant to be taught by this experience that *shūrā* strengthens the Ummah and disobedience of the leader weakens the Ummah.

The Prophet's (ﷺ) compassion was demonstrated when he arranged for the burial of Uḥud's *shahīds* at the battlefield, instead of allowing their bodies to be sent to the next of kin. And if any of the dead had been mistakenly conveyed to Madinah, their bodies were returned to be buried at Uḥud with the rest of the martyrs. He did not want their families and relatives to be overwhelmed by their "tragic" deaths. The Prophet (ﷺ) would visit their burial places, as did Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī after the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away. 'Alī would also pay his respects to those felled at Badr. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself participated in burying the martyrs.



He would combine more than one martyr in a grave and would try to match those who were closer to each other in life to be buried together in death. He did not object to family and relatives crying for their deceased warriors, even though they had attained *shahādah* (martyrdom). He was reported to have said, “Crying is from *al-Raḥmān* [Allah] and squalling is from Satan.”<sup>314</sup> It is reported that he was reluctant to have his aunt Ṣafiyah, Ḥamzah’s sister, look at her brother’s disfigured remains.<sup>315</sup>

Due to the severe nature of this military campaign the Prophet (ﷺ) expressed his thoughts and feelings to Allah (ﷻ) in the following invocation,

*○ Allah! All thanks are due to You. There is no one who can withhold what You have extended, and no one who can expand what You have held back. No one can guide those whom you have misguided, and no one can misguide those You have guided. No one can grant what you have seized, and no one can block off what You have given. There is nothing that can bring near what You have placed at a distance, and nothing that can place at a distance that which You have brought near.*

*○ Allah! Extend Your blessings to us, as well as Your mercy, Your abundance, and Your provisions. ○ Allah! I ask You for everlasting bliss without interruption and without limits. ○ Allah! I ask You for bliss on the Day of Dependence; I ask You for security on the Day of Fear. ○ Allah! I seek Your refuge from the vice that You have made available to us and from the vice that You have held back from us. ○ Allah! Endear us to imān and beautify it in our hearts; and make kufr, perversion, and disobedience distasteful to us. Have us undergo maturation by experience.*

*○ Allah! Have us die while we yield to You; and resurrect us in a state of yielding to You. Have us join the righteous without disgrace and without inferiority. ○ Allah! Advance us by force against those who try to incriminate Your prophets and try to divert from Your track. ○ Allah! Place them under*

*Your penalty and affliction. O Allah! Take on those who deny You Your power presence from those who have been vouchsafed scripture, for it is the Truth.*<sup>316</sup>

When everything that could go wrong went wrong at Uḥud it was Allah's (ﷻ) words, **“Pardon them, then, and pray that they be forgiven,”** and **“involve them in decision-making: *wa shāwirhum fī al-amr*”** — indeed, it was His command to Muhammad (ﷺ) to actively engage them in deciding their future course of action — that salvaged the day for these dejected and beaten Muslims.

### **Are *Shūrā* and Democracy One and the Same?**

It is from this *āyah* that Muslims from the first generation onward understood *shūrā* to be the basis for decision-making in an Islamic arrangement of society, organization of government, and formulation of public policy. There can be no Islamic system or Islamic governance without *shūrā*. The precedent has been established by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and all Muslims are expected to follow suit. But what exactly is meant by *shūrā*? The word used more than any other to translate *shūrā* is *consultation*. This is the word chosen by many commentators and translators for these *āyāt*, and specifically *āyah* 3:159. In another *āyah* Allah (ﷻ) mentions those **“whose rule [in all matters of common concern] is *shūrā* among themselves” (42:38).**

In our time there are uncritical Muslim scholars who consider *shūrā* to be the basis for the promotion of democracy in Muslim countries and societies. During the last century democracy has come to be much admired even by “Islamists.” By the middle of the 20th *jāhili* century, partly under the pressure of the rising expectations of citizens and partly in response to the terror of totalitarian systems in the 1930s and 1940s, it became commonplace to express approval for a political system by calling it “democratic.” Even one-party authoritarian states wanted to identify themselves with the aspiration toward democracy, and often incorporated the term into

the name of the state itself, as was the case with the German Democratic Republic, better known simply as East Germany, or today with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, better known as North Korea. Since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, and the move toward multi-party systems of government in some African and Latin American states, the notion has become widespread that democracy is not only desirable but also necessary as a form of government in the modern world. One writer, in the early flush of post-communist enthusiasm, even went so far as to proclaim the "end of history" and the view that liberal democracy would soon be triumphant throughout the world.<sup>317</sup>

Subsequent events, most notably the growth of national movements in Eastern Europe and the crushing of the democratic movement in Tiananmen Square in Beijing,<sup>318</sup> in which demonstrators demanding greater democracy were forcibly dispersed and many killed by government troops, have shown that this is a facile optimism. But they have also shown the need to make clearer the intellectual and moral foundations of a belief in democracy.

There is a sense in which the principles of democracy are secular ideals. Much contemporary democratic theorizing has grown out of the Enlightenment, a movement that was characterized by Peter Gay in *The Enlightenment* (an intellectual history of the 18th century), as the rise of modern paganism.<sup>319</sup> Certainly both the French and American Revolutions of the 18th century, important landmarks in the development of modern democracy, drew upon classical inspiration and often self-consciously modelled their political programs on ideals of popular sovereignty in Greece and Rome.<sup>320</sup> Perhaps more importantly, the growth of the idea of democracy required the view that the task of government was not to make its legislation correspond to a divinely given natural law, but instead to derive collective choices from the will of the people, where the people are regarded as responsible for the ordering of their own lives.

Writers on democracy typically distinguish two major institutional forms: *direct* democracy and *indirect* (or *representative*) democracy. In a direct democracy all citizens participate in the making of important collective decisions, whereas in an indirect democracy

the role of citizens is to elect representatives, who will then make policy and legislative decisions on behalf of the people. Historical examples of direct democracies include classical Athens, the Puritan New England townships, the Swiss cantons and small-scale pre-literate societies. In the 20th century, however, the dominant form of democratic government has been the representative variety. In such systems political parties compete with one another for a winning share of the popular vote, and hence for the right to be represented in the legislature and to form the government. Consistent with this general principle, there are many possible variations in types of government: presidential versus parliamentary systems, federal versus unitary systems, and two-party versus multi-party systems. Moreover, in order for any form of democratic competition to take place, representative democracies typically also require a battery of associated political and civil rights such as freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom from arbitrary arrest, and so on. For these reasons such systems are generally characterized as *constitutional democracies*.

Despite the naive over-simplifications of Islamic scholars who wax eloquent about *shūrā* being an analogue or a synonym for democracy, the view in the West itself that constitutional democracy in its present form is a justifiable form of government has not always been widespread. The traditional preference of many leading Western writers, following Aristotle, was for a *mixed* constitution, comprising monarchical, aristocratic, and popular elements who, it was alleged, would secure stability in government. Parliamentary representation was not of individuals, as it is in modern constitutional democracies, but of estates based on property ownership or of geographical entities such as cities. In many of the struggles over democratic reform in the 19th century the term *democracy* was used as a term of abuse, akin to the notion of *anarchy*.

This distrust of democracy was the result of a long tradition of political thought in the West, going back to Plato, for whom democracy was seen as government by the mob, which itself is held to be prone to erratic movements of opinion and liable to manipulation by demagogues. Outside the Western tradition, the imperial

states in China and India did not lend themselves to democratic theorizing. Although in the Western Christian tradition attention has been paid to questions of political theory by theologians such as Augustine and Aquinas,<sup>321</sup> the dominant question has been that of securing governance corresponding to the demands of *natural law*, rather than prescribing a particular form of popular government, that is, *positive law*. Even historical examples of direct democracies did not live up to modern ideals. Thus, women were typically excluded from the exercise of political power; therefore, it can be said that the secular ideal of all adults controlling their collective lives through discussion, debate, and the vote is a relatively recent one. It is difficult not to see it as a product of the rise of individualism more generally.

Within contemporary accounts of democracy there are many theoretical variations and many arguments for and against any particular form of democratic government, but with some oversimplification it is possible to distinguish two broad classes of opinion about democracy. On the one hand there is the view represented by James Mill (1773–1836) and Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950), who conceive of democracy principally in terms of accountable government; on the other hand there are those like John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) and Paul Tillich (1886–1965), who conceive of it as being a form of participatory or self-government.<sup>322</sup> According to the first conception the chief merit of democratic over non-democratic forms of government is that those who hold the reins of political power are made answerable for their actions, in the sense that they have to explain and justify the policy choices they make, and ultimately may be removed if an impartial accounting of their actions is found wanting. The essential function of democracy in this conception is to select a government, but it is equally important to prevent the government from using its position of preeminent power to tyrannize over society. One of the virtues of democracy, on this conception, is that it allows for the peaceful transfer of political power.

According to the second conception, democracy is a form of life in which the members of society participate, and the merit of a

democratic government is that it expresses at a collective level the ideal of a people's self-government, just as liberty at the personal level expresses the ideal of moral autonomy. The function of government in this conception is to represent the popular will, and emphasis is placed upon the ability of the government to act in the public interest. The exercise of the virtues of citizenship by individuals — such as serving on public bodies or exercising the will to defend the social order by resort to arms — has a high place in this second, participatory conception of democracy.

The distinction between democracy as accountable government and democracy as self-government is related to, though not identical with, the distinction between direct democracy and representative democracy. Participatory accounts of democracy favor direct democracy where this is possible, but, as some argue, the size of modern societies renders full and regular participation by all members of society in every important decision impossible. Indeed, even if social life were decentralized to small units the size of ancient Athens, the supposed home of participatory democracy, there would still not be enough time for everyone to have his or her say. To have a simple direct democracy would require political communities no larger than a few hundred members, for by the stage at which the political unit involved thousands some element of indirect representation would have necessarily evolved. For these practical reasons, the modern ideal of democracy is exhibited in the practice of representative government and cannot be limited to village-size communities. It is possible that developments in modern technology, for example two-way interactive conferencing or video, will be able to overcome some of the problems associated with size, but until then participatory theorists will continue to stress the opportunities for increased participation in representative democracy, such as measures to decentralize decision-making to local units of governance.

If the difference between the ideal of democracy as accountable government and the ideal of democracy as self-government does not correspond to the difference between direct and indirect democracy, wherein lies the distinction? One way of expressing the distinction is in terms of whether the function of democratic insti-

tutions is seen primarily as restraining the arrogance of power of those in government, or primarily as enabling the government to act in accordance with the will of the people in the formulation of public decisions. Proponents of democracy as accountable government are overawed by the potential for the misuse of power, and thereby try to prevent lawful government from degenerating into tyranny. Their primary reason for favoring democratic over non-democratic institutions is the desire to ensure that the unscrupulous in government can be thrown out when need be. Proponents of democracy as self-government see a more positive role for the exercise of political power, provided it is exercised in accordance with the will of the people. On this view the purpose of democracy is not simply to avoid bad government but also to promote good government. Good government will of course avoid tyranny, but it will also provide economic security to citizens and advance collective or common interests, such as for instance, protection from pollution and the development of an ethic of civic responsibility.

Behind these contrasting accounts of democracy there typically lie contrasting accounts of human interests and human motivation. The view of accountable government often assumes a pessimistic view of human nature, nicely captured in James Madison's remarks,

...what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.<sup>323</sup>

In other words, given that human motivation inclines people to seek power over one another for their own ends, the task of someone seeking to frame a democratic (or, as Madison would have put

it, *republican*) constitution is to establish those institutional devices that will prevent the lawful exercise of power from degenerating into tyranny.

This quotation also clearly illustrates the idea common to many versions of democracy as accountable government, namely that politics is an essentially *instrumental* activity which is not about the exercise of the virtues of citizenship but rather about making collective arrangements for the mutual benefit of those who live in a society. In this view the *state*, as the instrument of collective action, in its Western cast, is rather like an insurance company that guarantees certain forms of security but does not require a moral commitment from those who benefit from its actions.

For proponents of accountable government, democracy is related to motivation not simply as an effect but also as a cause. Since the emergence of the modern democratic movement in the 19th century, plenty of critics have been prepared to allege that democracy would lead to a form of collective mediocrity. The allegation is not simply that the majority would enact unjust legislation, for which the prime example is the compulsory redistribution of private property, but that the political culture of a democracy leads to a stifling uniformity that inhibits genius and talent.

For those who hold to the ideal of self-government, a different account of human motivation and commitment is presented. Typically a more optimistic view of human nature is taken, particularly with regard to the ability of citizens to take an intelligent and dispassionate view of public affairs. In the so-called “funeral oration” in *The Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides (460–400BCE) there occurs one of the earliest recorded praises of democracy. The orator in question is Pericles (495–429BCE), who praises the ancient Athenians for their willingness to make personal sacrifices for the common good, particularly the willingness of citizens to fight for the independence of Athens.<sup>324</sup> In *The Social Contract* Rousseau argued that the members of a self-governing community would decide their common affairs in accordance with the idea of a *general will* that would capture the sense of what was in the public interest.<sup>325</sup> And in *On Representative Government*, John Stuart Mill



thought that the principal justification for democracy flowed from the tendency of a democratic political system to provide opportunities for public service in which individuals could enlarge their sympathies and acquire a broadened outlook, enabling them to act in the public interest.<sup>326</sup> For Mill — as for Rousseau, Pericles, and many Muslim intellectuals — democracy was not simply a means by which individuals made arrangements for matters of common security and interest, but also an education in citizenship and collective action.

The choice between these contrasting conceptions of democracy raises many complex issues of social science and political theory that are currently the subject of much debate. Yet, despite the complexity of the issues, the choice can still be manipulated by argument and evidence. One approach is to explore how far each conception is consistent with what may be taken to be the underlying justification for democratic government in the first place. In the secular scheme there are many reasons for favoring democratic over non-democratic forms of government. Indeed, one of the reasons why democratic institutions are justified is that they seem to lie at the confluence of a range of disparate considerations. Thus, one reason for finding democratic government preferable to non-democratic government is that the consequences of democracy are on the whole better, in terms of issues like living standards and the protection of civil rights, than the consequences of non-democratic government. This was a central motive for the 1989 uprisings in Eastern Europe. Another reason for finding democracy preferable is that the ideal of autonomy and self-government at the collective level finds expression in democratic government in a way that cannot be true in non-democratic government. Democratic government is simply one way in which persons living together determine a common collective course of action, and even among perfect beings, contrary to Madison, it may be assumed that collective discussion would be necessary in order to agree upon and coordinate a common course of action.

In pursuit of this secular line of thought that has no inspiration or direction from divinity and scripture, much turns at this point upon the question of how far individuals can be expected to

internalize a sense of the common good. Proponents of democracy as accountable government are not entirely consistent on this score. Thus, although Madison in *The Federalist Papers* inclines to the view that government is best regarded as a protection against human selfishness, John Jay, in one of the early Federalist papers, describes the delegates to the convention in Philadelphia that drew up the US Constitution as being without awe for power and uninfluenced by “any passions except love for their country.”<sup>327</sup>

Joseph Schumpeter, who was generally skeptical of the extent to which people could take an intelligent interest in public affairs, nevertheless insisted that a stable democratic order required citizens to internalize a sense of self-restraint so that not too great a burden was placed upon the functions of government. Thus, even in modest conceptions of democracy, some room has to be found for the idea that individual citizens can rise above their own narrow personal concerns in order to take into account the effect of their actions upon the public good, and from this point of view the assumptions about human nature implicit in participatory accounts of democracy seem implicit in any form of democratic theory.

An important theme among critics of participatory conceptions of democracy is the possibility of tyranny by the majority. Schumpeter, for example, was keen to distinguish popular from rightful government action, arguing that one could imagine a fully functioning democracy persecuting religious dissent, as did Calvin’s Geneva, where the Jews were only able to escape the effects of popular anti-Semitism in the Middle Ages by sheltering under the protection of the Church and of princes. Despite John Stuart Mill’s advocacy of a participatory version of representative government, he too was worried by what he perceived to be the tendency toward mediocrity in mass societies. In both cases the thought seems to be that elements of elitism are necessary to counterbalance some of the destructive tendencies inherent in the growth of democracy.

Although such arguments are widespread, it is difficult to obtain unambiguous evidence to support them, and much evidence seems to point in the opposite direction. Because representative

democracies presuppose certain political freedoms, for example freedom of association and freedom of expression, the protection and development of democracy is often coextensive with the protection and development of a broader range of constitutional freedoms. Moreover, abuses of civil rights within democratic societies, such as racial inequalities in the US or discrimination against Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland, are typically sustained by political devices, such as the gerrymandering of constituency boundaries and the denial of suffrage to members of oppressed groups. These devices are generally inconsistent with the ideals of political equality and participation that underlie the way democracy is theoretically constructed. Some would say that for these reasons it may well be that the fears of tyranny by the majority over others have been significantly overstated.

To say that the principles of constitutional democracy enjoy widespread appeal is not necessarily to assume that the wave of the future will be on the side of Western democratic forms of government. Poverty, the pressures of nationalism, ethnic tensions and “religious” self-determination may well neutralize the attractiveness of democracy in various countries around the world.

A “westoxicated” class of intellectual but naive Muslims argues that *shūrā* channels the individual and collective aspirations of a people for self rule in electing representatives and leaders to democratic institutions designed to function in the public interest. One of the main reasons there are Muslims jumping on the Western bandwagon of political science and opportunistically equating *shūrā* with democracy is the fact that Muslims never really established in a systematic way the implementation of *shūrā*. This is due to the rather short period of time in which the early Muslims had a real Islamic will to practice and apply the principle of *shūrā*. That time period extended from the founding years of the Islamic state in Madinah to the assassination of Imam 'Alī in Iraq. There may have been traces of *shūrā* in the ensuing dynasties and oligarchies, but definitely not at a level where it could be said that enough historical experience with *shūrā* exists so that it can be defined within well-known perimeters.

From the early exercise of *shūrā* by Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), his Companions, and their followers, the Tābi‘ūn, it is clear that all the Muslim citizens of an Islamic state are entitled to a say on issues of public interest, the declaration of war, and even some details of how that war should be prosecuted, as was the case with Uḥud. In a certain way of looking at things, it was easier at that time simply because the Islamic State and populace were limited to Madinah and its environs, whereas today there are millions of square miles and billions of people to “absorb” into the *shūrā* process. So it is up to us to find ways to get willing and interested Muslims to present their point of view and “vote” on matters of policy, strategy, and public interest, which is approximately what the word *amr* in the context of *shūrā* refers to. Therefore, the form of *shūrā* that meets such criteria is for us to improvise; the means by which *shūrā* is practiced is also left to our initiative and imagination. All these procedures and processes are left to our better judgement; so we may make provisions for a variable and flexible application of the principle of *shūrā* that is able to respond to and accommodate changing circumstances, increasing populations, expanding territories, and resource restrictions, such as, for instance, budgetary constraints or limited means of communication and data-transfer. What is important is to persuade the Muslims of an Islamic state to *participate* in order to influence the final decisions of public policy, state strategy, and the declaration and execution of war.

We should keep in mind that this emphasis on *shūrā* became scriptural and Qur’anic *after* the consequences of *shūrā* pertaining to the conduct of war at Uḥud proved apparently unsatisfactory. It could be argued that the Prophet’s (ﷺ) convening of a *shūrā* preceding the war at Uḥud led to a break in the Muslim ranks. At a time when consensus was needed for the war effort this *shūrā* apparently generated irreconcilable opinions. The two dominant opinions that surfaced as a result of this *shūrā* argued on the one hand for the Muslim forces to stay in Madinah or on the other to leave the city-state and fight in the open, away from Madinah. Whatever one might say for or against either opinion, the fact is that a type of polarization resulted from that *shūrā*, with serious results: ‘Abdullāh

ibn Ubayy defected before the outbreak of hostilities with one-third of the Muslim fighting force, having not even seen the enemy. This *shūrā* before Uḥud included the general Muslim public, who obviously were not military experts. Yet even though they were going to be the soldiers in the impending war, some may assert that the *shūrā* should have been limited to the people who were familiar with military tactics and strategies. It can be argued in hindsight that the final decision was not “militarily sound;” and that the Muslims later learned from their mistakes at Uḥud and fought a defensive war during the Campaign of al-Aḥzāb, also known as the Battle of al-Khandaq (the trench). At that time the Muslims did stay within Madinah; as a strategy of war, they dug a trench around the accessible portion of the city for protection. On this occasion, they did not go out and meet the enemy on open ground as they had at Uḥud.

Muhammad (ﷺ) was not oblivious to the fact that the Muslims’ majority decision might cost them dearly; he was not unmindful of the fact that the principle of *shūrā* had yielded this dangerous risk. He may well have had a premonition or a preconceived notion of what might lie ahead. It would appear he had sufficient reason to ignore the majority opinion emerging from the pre-Uḥud *shūrā*. But the fact is that he adopted and followed the majority decision because his precedent was intended to be binding on his Ummah. He was not concerned about the immediate results so much as he was concerned with the long-lasting results of a binding *shūrā* on all Muslim decision-makers until the end of time. In other words, he was legislating for mankind and not only for Madinah. His political practice had to be established regardless of the immediate results that would disturb the fabric of his own family and society. In this manner he was educating his Ummah and establishing a customary mode of behavior in situations that demand the mental acumen of all Muslims who make up the Islamic body politic.

In retrospect, and after the reversals at Uḥud, it would seem “logical” for Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) to limit the concept and application of *shūrā* because it had wreaked havoc in the Muslim society of Madinah. Someone could conceivably argue that this type of *shūrā*

led to division and discord in a society preparing for war. But these arguments are trivial; the fact is that *shūrā* cannot be measured by physical, material, or military setbacks. It is a principle, a rule, and a standard that comes with all major civic, societal, and state-supervised policies. *Shūrā* closes the ranks of Muslims before they take action, whatever the consequences of that action may turn out to be. *Shūrā* is a way in which a majority can feel a moral responsibility to stand up for its judgment, belief, and point of view when such issues are up for discussion, debate, and deliberation — as was the case just before the Muslims went out to Uḥud. If, after the *shūrā* and the ensuing collective effort, the self-aware Muslim public realizes it has made an error of judgment, it will have time to reflect and correct itself for similar situations in the future. Muslims are not infallible; they will make mistakes. But Muslims are not supposed to be stupid: they can learn from their mistakes and correct them. In this manner Muslims are taught to be responsible for not only their decisions but also for the practical consequences of such decisions. The losses at Uḥud dwarf in comparison with the principle of *shūrā* that was instituted and demonstrated on the way to Uḥud. Sometimes trying to avoid material losses cannot substitute for initiating a policy or principle such as *shūrā*. And sometimes an obsession with material gains versus material losses will lead to a loss of essence, substance, and ideology.

If ever there was an excuse to exclude the *shūrā* mode of conducting legal and representative proceedings, that excuse would have been in the precise circumstances preceding Uḥud. Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) and scripture could have easily substituted for “majority opinion” or “consensual agreement.” So why should there be any need for *shūrā* at such a delicate time? All the arguments against convening a *shūrā* — the impeccable leadership and decision-making of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), the reliance on the Prophet's (ﷺ) understanding of scripture, the catastrophic results that ensued, the public's fuzziness about where the war zone should be (in Madinah or outside of it) — did not in any way cause the Muslims to reconsider, rethink, or reappraise critically the concept and institution of *shūrā*. *Shūrā* remains up to this very moment a

bedrock principle and a fundamental procedure of the Islamic decision-making process. When everything seemed to have gone wrong because of this traumatic *shūrā*, Allah (ﷻ) finalized the whole shock of Uḥud by saying these everlasting words of comfort, **“Pardon them, then, and pray that they be forgiven. And seek their advice in all matters of public policy.”**

And it turns out that this whole process remains incomplete unless it is concluded by utter confidence and undivided reliance upon Allah (ﷻ). Once a decision is reached by public participation, and once a plan of action is agreed upon by the engagement of a free and fair majority, this whole activity has to be launched with an absolute trust in Allah (ﷻ) and an integrated dependence upon His power and wisdom. And to this end Allah (ﷻ) in truth says, **“Then, when you have decided upon a course of action, place your prospect [and promise] in Allah; for, surely, Allah loves those who place their trust in Him.”**

One of the attainments of *shūrā* is to examine minutely the options and opinions lying dormant in the minds of voters who besides being expected to shed their blood for a policy should be able to express themselves in formulating what will eventually become that policy. No leader, as the Prophet (ﷺ) himself was demonstrating, ought to expect people to fight for a decision from which they were excluded. But once the final consensual decision has been confirmed by the ultimate decision maker — the imam, *khalīfah*, or *amīr* — the time comes when the people are expected to carry out their decision. And at the point of initiation, all citizens and constituents are advised by these words of Allah (ﷻ) to be studious and serious, especially about the single-minded reliance upon Allah (ﷻ).

In the pre-engagement phase of Uḥud, Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) taught the Muslims the centrality of *shūrā* in the Islamic decision-making process. In the second phase he showed them how to follow through on their collective decisions, whatever the consequences, however the outcome, and wherever the “pieces fall.” His behavior as a decision-maker leaves no doubt in anyone’s mind that an Islamic society can place its trust in Allah (ﷻ) on the one hand

and then equivocate or sidestep the collective determination on the other hand. When he made up his mind and honored the majority assessment he went directly into his home and put on his military gear. He knew exactly where he was going from there. He had a notion of the pain, sacrifices, and setbacks that lay ahead. Even when the enthusiasts — those who may be considered by some the zealots who lobbied for going out and engaging the enemy in an open battleground — had second thoughts, after they felt they had unduly exerted influence upon the Prophet (ﷺ), and tried to withdraw their opinion, they were rebuffed by Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). He made it very clear to them: the decision had been made and there was no place for equivocation or vacillation; everyone had to act in unison. The Prophet's (ﷺ) statement on this occasion is a lesson for all Muslim armies,

*It does not behoove a prophet who has put on his military gear, and given marching orders, it does not behoove him to reconsider and recede. The enemy is engaged. I called upon you to stay within Madinah; but most of you wanted to go forth. Now, you are advised of being vigilant of Allah's power presence; be steadfast when the pressure increases and when you engage the enemy. Be observant of what Allah has ordered you to do.<sup>328</sup>*

This whole lesson, within the larger context of Uḥud, is overlooked by many who read these *āyāt* and fail to learn from them. *Shūrā* has its time frame; it runs its course, and once an overwhelming opinion develops from the *shūrā*, there should be no lingering equivocations, doubts, or second thoughts. Once the *shūrā* is over, it is time for work, implementation, and results. After the *shūrā* is concluded, everyone's trust — whether they argued for or against the decision that was reached — must be categorically placed in Allah (ﷻ). There is no need to convene another *shūrā* to override the first one. If observant Muslims proceed with their best judgment it is Allah (ﷻ) who will formulate the results. It is this attitude and conduct that Allah (ﷻ) favors, **“Allah loves those who [thus] place their trust in Him.”**



### Victory Comes from the Human Integration into God’s Will

The question that comes to mind when war is in the air is: are we going to win? When Muslims defer to the Will of Allah (ﷻ) they should feel that victory and defeat are the results of Allah’s (ﷻ) determination. If there is a source of hope and an expectation for victory it should come from the sincere bond that comes from being with Allah (ﷻ), by standing up for Him, and by sacrificing for His cause. This is easier said than done. To learn this lesson, the Muslims had to suffer the ordeal of Uḥud and all the parallels with it in their history. It is not easy to accept that Muslims were defeated at Uḥud because of what they did and did not do. Their behavior at Uḥud had to be sized up by Allah’s (ﷻ) unflinching words of truth, **“If Allah supports you, none can ever overcome you; but if He should forsake you, who could support you thereafter? In Allah, then, let the committed Muslims place their hope” (3:160).**

Allah’s (ﷻ) will takes its course in nature and it also takes its course in the human sphere. Consequences are tied to determining factors. Causal factors are not usually a complete explanation for the way things go. The final determining factor is Allah (ﷻ); so Allah (ﷻ) Himself calculates the effect and outcome to “fit” the effort and action. Allah (ﷻ) asks of Muslims to do their share, to discharge their responsibility, and to move toward Him. The final result will ultimately be the way Allah (ﷻ), in His knowledge of all things, wills it to be. In this manner all consequences and outcomes are produced by Allah’s (ﷻ) will even though man has contributed. With this understanding, human beings can come to no other realization other than they cannot impose their will or expectations upon Allah (ﷻ).

The hard fact that had to be digested by the Muslims of Uḥud was: victory and defeat are ultimately determined by Allah (ﷻ) Himself, alone. If Allah (ﷻ) decrees victory for His obedient combatants they will have it; but if He decrees defeat for His less-than-obedient combatants they will have that. This is not an easy lesson to learn, especially when bodies are injured and dying, and strength is ebbing. But this is the way the Qur’an is applied to the entire

range of human experience. The Qur'an was never meant to be a "theoretical" presentation of the facts of life, or to be studied only in seclusion or solitude; it is the emergence of truth from correct or incorrect behavior in life. These *āyāt* describe human behavior that is expressed in accordance with either an awareness of Allah's (ﷻ) presence or a remoteness from Him. The consequences of such temperament and deportment become the eventual results of human effort and even human sacrifices.

It is not easy to say to enlisted personnel in action that the outcome of the war is going to be determined by Allah (ﷻ), especially when many of these conscripts are willing to give their lives for a triumphal conclusion of hostilities. But the essence of this whole matter is the fact that committed, combatant Muslims should know, unlike secular and worldly armies, they have engaged the Will of Allah (ﷻ) on their side, and therefore they should understand that there is no power or military capability except what Allah (ﷻ) has offered them. Thus, when Muslims fight and kill or are being killed, all of that is done with the active presence and participation of Allah (ﷻ) — a privilege that no other army or cause has. And though this is the case, Muslims are still required to obey instructions, discharge their duties, exert themselves to their utmost, and have unshakable confidence in Allah (ﷻ).

If today's Muslims were placing their trust in Allah (ﷻ) they would not be making humiliating rounds from one capital to another, begging for military assurances, and pleading for security and stability. Are the current rulers in the Arabian cradle of Islam, inasmuch as they claim to be the extension of this Qur'anic lesson and prophetic experience, placing their trust in Allah (ﷻ)? Are the rulers in the birthplace of this Qur'an closer to the *mushriks*, who rely on "powers" other than Allah (ﷻ), or are they closer to the graduates of the Uḥud academy, who knew through experience that confidence comes not from reliance on a Pentagon or a White House but only from trust in Allah (ﷻ). What a contrast there is between the record of Muhammad (ﷺ), who was the head of the Islamic State in Madinah, who was taught by these heavenly words to forgive and overlook the errors and misjudgments of those around

him on one hand, and on the other hand, the record of the current tribe that rules Arabia, who are complicit in premeditated and calculated acts of war against the Islamic movement. The facts on the ground prove that the royal *mushriks* of Arabia have thrown God to the wind (*nastaghfir-allāh*). The contemporary Ummah needs a new generation of *muttaqī* leaders who will inspire its willingness to follow them out of the quagmire of Western modernity and secularism to Allah (ﷻ), His beloved Messenger, and His Book.

### No Prophet Ever Had a Defective or Duplicitous Character

The Prophet’s (ﷺ) personality stands out by its quality and merits. He truly was an imam and leader in all that he said, did, and permitted. Allah’s (ﷻ) words, “**And it was by Allah’s grace that you [O Prophet] did deal gently with them [your comrades-in-arms]**” place him on a moral position of great esteem. He combined all manners of virtue: ancestral honor, faithfulness, integrity, generosity, eloquence, mildness, humility, and the honor of being Allah’s final Prophet (ﷺ). It is reported that he sewed and mended his own clothes. He repaired his own shoes. He was attached to his family and affiliated with the powerless people in society. It is this type of fine character that instituted the concept and practice of *shūrā*. Never, anywhere in the Qur’an, the records of the Sīrah, the literature of the Hadith, or the accounts of the lives and deeds of the early generations of Muslims, do we find any reference to, for instance, the democracy of Greece. Those pioneering Muslims knew that their implementation of Allah’s (ﷻ) will was not some adoption of Western political thought, or European social behavior, or Greek philosophy and ethics. It was taken for granted within the learned circles of those generations that any ruler who ignores or does not exercise *shūrā* should be relieved of his responsibilities or overthrown. In another *āyah* Allah (ﷻ) says, “**And their public interest is decided by their mutual *shūrā*...**” (42:38).

The *āyah*, “**And confer with them in all matters of public concern...**” means that it is permissible to open a discussion and

bring about a less popular and a more popular public opinion as a result of such deliberations. All of this was shown by the *shūrā* before Uḥud and by the above *āyāt*.

**And it is not conceivable that a prophet should deceive [in military affairs, or in anything else], since he who deceives shall be faced with his deceit on the Day of Resurrection, when every human being shall be repaid in full for whatever he has done, and none shall be wronged [by any injustice].**

Is then he who strives after Allah's goodly acceptance like the one who has earned the burden of Allah's condemnation and whose goal is Hell? And how vile a journey's end! They are on [entirely] different levels in the sight of Allah; for Allah sees all that they do.

Indeed, Allah bestowed a favor upon the committed Muslims when He raised up in their midst an apostle from among themselves, to convey His messages to them, and to cause them to grow in purity, and to impart unto them the divine Writ as well as wisdom — whereas before that they were indeed, most obviously, lost in error (3:161–164).

**“And it is not conceivable that a prophet should deceive [in matters pertaining to the distribution of spoils of war]...”** There should be no Muslim who can even suspect that Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) would betray anyone's trust when it comes to the allocation of war booty. It is not conceivable that any prophet would be false or dishonest when all the fighters had placed their lives on the line equally. Human nature, though, has its way of thinking ill of others; and this may be especially intense in the theater of war. There may have been a few individuals who suspected the Prophet (ﷺ) might not be even-handed in the distribution of the battle-spoils. This could not have even crossed his mind, much less be considered **“... since he who deceives shall be faced with his deceit on the Day of Resurrection.”** Prophets (ﷺ) are the first people to live with

the fact that they are approaching the Day of Reckoning, as if they were already living that day.

It is said that this *āyah* was revealed to take account of those archers who abandoned their assigned posts during the Battle of Uhūd. They had done so to obtain whatever they could of the *ghanimah* (the spoils of war). They were apparently afraid the Prophet (ﷺ) would say at the end of the battle that the booty is “whatever you can get your hands on” or “first come, first served.” And as these archers were at a distance from the spoils of war, they thought it made sense to rush in, as the *mushriks* were retreating, and seize their share. From their misguided train of thought, they determined that the Prophet (ﷺ) would unjustly distribute the war commodities. Or they might have figured that because the Prophet (ﷺ) had not apportioned out spoils after Badr he would probably do the same here. What they did not realize is that Badr was fought partly to compensate the Muslims from Makkah, who were in a sense an economic “underclass” in Madinah. Because the Muhājirūn had been forced to leave everything behind in Makkah, the *mushriks* had appropriated all of that stranded wealth for themselves. Muhammad (ﷺ) addressed them, saying, “*Did I not tell you [the archers] not to leave your positions until you receive my orders?*” They answered, “But we left the rest of our brethren standing [in our place, or filling in for us].” To which Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) answered, “*Rather, you may have thought we were going to be dishonest in allocating the war items, that we would not equally dispense them.*”<sup>329</sup>

The words of discipline in these *āyāt* shed further light on the outstanding character of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) and on his attitude to his duties. By the words of Allah (ﷻ) and the behavior of His Prophet (ﷺ), it would have been impossible for him to be unfair to anyone, “**...it is not within the character of any prophet to do so.**” Being a prophet places Muhammad and all the Prophets (ﷺ) preceding him on a moral crest that excludes any failure of character. But what is equally telling is the fact that fighters who are on the Prophet’s (ﷺ) side would entertain the idea that Muhammad (ﷺ) might be less than honest in his dealings with them. This would mean that, beside the *munāfiqs* who broke away from the Muslim

army on their way to Uḥud, there were still some who actually entered the war zone and were placed in militarily sensitive positions. Such were the ones who, if the truth be told, thought that Muhammad (ﷺ) would be underhanded or untrustworthy.

Allah (ﷻ) was quick to rectify such notions: the concept of the Day of Resurrection was immediately stimulated in the conscience of Muslims so all would know that no one will be able to get away with “skimming off” some of the material remnants of war when “...every human being shall be redressed in full for whatever he has done, and none shall be treated unjustly.” An echo of this meaning is found in another place in the Qur’an. Luqmān told his son,

**O my dear son! Verily, though there be nothing but the weight of a mustard seed, and though it be [hidden] in a rock, or in the skies, or in the earth, Allah will bring it to light: for, behold, Allah is unfathomable [in His knowledge], All-Aware” (31:16).**

This awareness and deep understanding that Allah (ﷻ) is alert and responsive to everything we do in this world raises the status and refines the character of committed Muslims. By contrast, in today’s America, and even in its military, there is the notion that “...if you can get away with it (immorality or criminality), do it!” This line of thought does not exist in the Muslim mind, much less it being a feature of the Muslim’s character. If Muslims make the Qur’an a part of their consciences, they are at the Day of Judgment in their feelings and internal thoughts before they arrive there with their bodies. Many *āyāt* throughout the Qur’an stimulate the awareness that we humans cannot do anything outside of Allah’s (ﷻ) observation and documentation,

**And the record [of everyone’s deeds] will be laid open; and you will behold the guilty filled with dread at what [they see] therein; and they will exclaim, “Oh, woe to us! What a record is this! It leaves out nothing, be it**

**small or great, but takes everything into account!” For they will find all that they ever did [now] facing them, and [will know that] your Sustainer does not wrong anyone (18:49).**

Then the Qur’an corrects the misconception that a person who does what is right is equal to or like a person who does wrong. Those who are conscious of Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence and act accordingly cannot be equated with those who are oblivious of Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence and act accordingly. Some people deserve Allah’s (ﷻ) inclination toward them and His satisfaction with them because they mold their lives around Him; others bring upon themselves Allah’s (ﷻ) wrath and corrective action. They cannot avoid this consequence as they move themselves toward the worst dwelling, namely *Jahannam* (Hell); Allah (ﷻ) asks, **“Is he who strives after Allah’s favor like the one who has earned the burden of Allah’s censure and whose destiny is the netherworld? And how miserable a journey’s end!”** This echoes other reinforcing *āyāt*,

**Is he who [in his earthly life] was committed to Allah to be compared with one who was iniquitous? [No], these two are not equal (32:18).**

**[For], would We treat those who have committed to Allah and do righteous deeds in the same manner as [We shall treat] those who disperse turpitude on earth? Would We treat those who are attentive to Allah’s power presence in the same manner as those who are viciously dismissive of Allah [and His power]? (38:28).**

Have the Muslims who have converted to liberalism never read these *āyāt*? It would seem not; or they ignore them and **“...cast them behind their backs.”**

One who reads the Qur’an attentively understands there is a pronounced demarcation-line between people who are thoughtful

of Allah (ﷻ) in whatever they do and people who are thoughtless of Allah (ﷻ). And within these two separate blocs of people there are degrees of dedication and levels of loyalty to Allah (ﷻ) or against Allah (ﷻ) as the determinant of social and personal reality. The highest rank near to Allah (ﷻ) is that of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the most distant station is the hell-hole of the *munāfiqs*, those who refuse to consolidate their loyalty and allegiance to Allah (ﷻ), **“Truly, the *munāfiqs* shall be in the deepest pit of the fire...” (4:145)**. Even man’s quality of being loyal, his feelings of allegiance, and the act of binding intellectually or emotionally to Allah (ﷻ) before and during his actions on earth is closely watched and recorded by Allah (ﷻ). Man’s action in this world is traced to its psychological roots, **“Prosperous is he who refines his [own] self; and lost [to goodness] is he who buries it [in darkness and ignorance]” (91:9–10)**. At the end of life’s journey these two tendencies are the ones that count. Each member of every group will reap the results of his own labor and endeavor. No one will be exempt and no one will be treated unjustly or cheated.

What is to be understood from the following *āyah*?

**Surely, Allah bestowed a [great] favor upon the [committed] Muslims when He raised up in their midst an apostle from among themselves, to convey Allah’s messages to them, and to cause them to grow in purity, and to teach them scripture as well as wisdom [and their implications] — whereas until then they had been lost in obvious error (3:164).**

We understand that Allah (ﷻ) selected their prophet from their own society. Muhammad was an Arab descended from Ismā’il (ﷺ). This is not meant to imply a racist prejudice. What it signifies is the fact that communication within a social unit to which a person belongs is easier than to speak across cultural, linguistic, and social divergences. The people around Muhammad knew him well before he became Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ). This knowledge helped them decide whether they should accept and follow him, or not. An



“outsider” or a “foreigner” would not be able to stir the core of a social order the way an “insider” or a “native” can. That is why, throughout scriptural history, almost all Prophets (ﷺ) were raised from their own social and cultural milieus.

Occasionally this was not the case, and this is the exception to the general rule. For example, there is the presence of Yūsuf (ﷺ) — Joseph in the biblical context — in Egypt; his influence was exerted from a position of power. Yūsuf (ﷺ) was not, in today’s jargon, a “native” or even a “naturalized member” of the Egyptian state or its political community. He was not a product of the environment and conditions that would have made him a typical Egyptian of that time. So his prophetic period was one of pressing ahead with his mission from another angle; and his particular circumstances were supervised by Allah (ﷻ) to allow him to assume a position of power in a government that was not “Islamic” in order for him to begin a corrective process of justice “from above.” To reiterate, Yūsuf (ﷺ) was an exception to the general rule.

So Muhammad (ﷺ), his mission, and his scripture were “locally specific” to begin with but inclusive and global in scope. The local beginnings may be implied in the following *āyah*, “...and, indeed, this [revelation] shall certainly become a [source of] eminence [honor, dignity] for you [Muhammad] and your people” (43:44). The transnational scope of the Muhammadi mission is stated thus, “And [therefore, O Muhammad], We have sent you as [an evidence of Our] grace toward all the [human and other] domains.” (21:107) These human domains would include every type of community — family, tribe, culture, etc. — by which human beings identify themselves in their collective lives.

The second perception emanating from this *āyah* is that Muhammad (ﷺ) was required to instill in the people around him Allah’s (ﷻ) power influence in the course of their lives. People are expected to learn and understand how Allah (ﷻ) expresses Himself, His knowledge, and His sole existence in the way societies rise and fall and in the ways history unfolds. The material world has its laws and the social world has its laws; both sets of laws come from the same source, Allah (ﷻ), and they eventually serve the same purpose,

**Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are illustrations [of Allah's power and reality] for those who [aspire to] attain to true insight (3:190).**

Another reading of *āyah* 3:164 suggests that Muhammad (ﷺ) would purge people of their pagan perversions and their ideological misapprehensions. Many human beings believe in superstitions and illusions. They can grow through the Muhammadi experience from illusions to intelligence, from myth to reason, and from naiveté to refinement. A social and political order that comes into being under a people who are aware of Allah's (ﷻ) power is what was needed then, and it is what is needed now. Muhammad (ﷺ) can still, by his leadership and example, enable wayward human populations to make that transition from primitive self-centered societies to a civilized God-centered society — if they would only let him. By following him, by truly loving him, and by aspiring to emulate him in achieving what he and his companions did, all humanity can uplift itself from imposed social degradation by maximalist powers.

The process of establishing such an order also has other consequences: an emotional, spiritual, ethical, and intellectual revival that produces scholars, writers, leaders, and sages. All of this acculturation can result in an age of reason within a few decades of a society's emergence from its *jāhili* dark age. The first recipients of this Qur'an and the followers of this Prophet (ﷺ) were effectively an uncouth, impulsive people. It was the impact of Muhammad (ﷺ) and of the Qur'an that transformed ignorant, uninformed nomads and bedouins into the founders of an Islamic civilization, the like of which is difficult to find in the annals of human history. This proves that such a transformation is possible provided that the catalyst is allowed to be the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Scripture he brought for us.

This metamorphosis from being the equivalent of cavemen to becoming a society with a high purpose was expressed by Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭālib when he addressed the king of Abyssinia in the presence of delegates from Quraysh. These delegates had been sent to

demand the extradition of the Muslims who sought security and justice in that part of Africa. Ja‘far said,

Respected king! We were a [semi] society — a people of ignorance. We venerated idols; we consumed carrion [dead and rotting animal meat]. We also committed morally outrageous acts. Our family relationships were disintegrating and our neighborly dealings were unfavorable. People in power would devour those who were powerless...

This sums up the way we were until Allah (ﷻ) sent us an apostle who was one of us. We were keenly aware of his family lineage, his truth, his honesty, and his high moral character. He called on us to revere Allah (ﷻ) only, by affirming His singularity and by conforming and complying with Him. We, in the process, had to renounce and abdicate our ancestral creed that idolized stones and graven images. This apostle enjoined us to tell the truth, to honor our word, to call on and see our relatives. He also taught us to be well-disposed and amiable with our neighbors; and to refrain from evil and aggressive behavior.

Furthermore, he forbade any immoral conduct. False statements and testimonies were prohibited. Orphans’ money and possessions were now sacrosanct as was the honor of women. All in all, he propelled us to conform to Allah (ﷻ) who has no equivalent, rival, or associate. He also exhorted us to socialize our prayers, fasting, and alms-giving.<sup>330</sup>

Muhammad (ﷺ), the Qur’an, and Islam converted a *jāhiliyah* of complex ignorance into the high culture of a purely Islamic society. A contrast with the immoral abyss of the *jāhiliyah* will help one better understand the moral heights of Islam. The following is a narrative from Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah as she describes sexuality and male-female relations during the time of *jāhiliyah*,

Coitus during the days of *jāhiliyah* fell into one of four modes or attitudes. There was the act of sexual procreation between a man and a woman, much in the same manner as is the case nowadays [in an Islamic society]. A man would propose to have the hand of his future wife. This marriage proposal would be presented to the bride's father or guardian. On acceptance, the groom would offer a dowry, and upon the bride's acceptance of that, the marriage would then be consummated.

Another form of sexual relation would ensue when a wife had just finished her menstrual cycle [when the monthly discharge of blood from the uterus ceases]. At this particular time a husband would tell his wife, "Go to so-and-so and have him inseminate you." This husband, after allowing his wife to copulate with another man, would not have sex with her until she was apparently pregnant by the other man. Once it became apparent that she was carrying a child from the other man, her husband may choose at that time to have sex with her if he so desired. The *jāhili* rationale for this was the desire to have a better genetic constitution or a respectable social status for the offspring. [The "biological" father here would be of a higher social status than the mother's "legal" husband]. This was called the marriage of *istibḍā'* [adulterine insemination].

Another form of intercourse would concern a group of up to ten men who would copulate with a woman. After that she would become pregnant and give birth. Days after she would have given birth she would call for all of them. None of them [by the force of custom and tradition] would absent himself from her summons. When they all were in her presence she would say to them, "You all are aware of what you have done; now I have given birth. It is your baby;" and then she would point to a particular man. The baby would then become the child of that particular "father." The man could do nothing about it.

[In] the fourth mode of intercourse, men took turns to have access to a woman, in fact a prostitute. These harlots would decorate their doors with ribbons. Anyone wanting them would enter into their rooms and have them for pleasure. If she became pregnant, provisions would be collected for her and her baby, and then arbitrarily a father would be appointed for the child. He would adopt the child because he had no choice [that was the law of the land].<sup>331</sup>

We may compare the *jāhiliyah* of those days with the *jāhiliyah* of these days, and find that nothing much has changed. In those times man was crude, primitive, and uninformed. If he wanted a child composed of better genes than his own, he would choose a man of exceptional qualities and elevated social status, send his wife to be impregnated by him, and then assume the role of father to that child, after acquiring what he regarded as a superior child to what might have been an inferior one had he himself been the biological father. This suggests that even in an area such as Arabia at that time there was a notion of the connection between genetic lineage (purity) and inheritance. This would explain why a man would tell his wife to go to a man of gentry or aristocracy and get his child.

The Western *jāhiliyah* is much more complex and considerably more sophisticated than the obnoxious *jāhiliyah* of yore. As is stated in this narrative from ‘Ā’ishah, the loose husband-and-wife relationship was a permanent feature of that scriptureless society. In our time, or in other words our modern *jāhiliyah*, we are overwhelmed with a scientific camouflage of what amounts to an abandonment of the way Allah (ﷻ) has commanded man to order his intimate relations. The *ma’rūf* (the self-evident truth) in physical relations between man and woman is the honorable intimacy of marriage. But in today’s world, those who theorize and “think for us” have invented other perversions, one of which, for instance, is artificial insemination. The scientific presentation of this has marketed its utility under “logical common reasons,” such as male infertility and the prevention of hereditary diseases such as cystic fibrosis, hemo-

philia, Rh disease, muscular dystrophy, and Tay-Sachs disease.<sup>332</sup> Any couple that applies for artificial insemination must be carefully screened and both partners must agree in writing to receive sperm from a donor; the resultant child is then recognized to be the recipient male's own. In the parallel Arabian society a man's word and a tribe's tradition was their honor; they needed no signatures. Otherwise, what we see today is a repeat performance of 'Ā'ishah's summary of sexual practice in Arabia before Islam.<sup>333</sup>

After this comparison with the *jāhiliyah* of antiquity, Allah's (ﷻ) words are even more moving when He says,

**Indeed, Allah privileged the committed Muslims when He commissioned an apostle from among them, to discern His power presence [in human affairs], and to raise their status, and to teach them the divine Writ as well as wisdom — whereas before that they were obviously, most patently, lost and forsaken (3:164).**

In both the ancient and modern *jāhiliyahs* women are sex-objects, pleasure providers, and “inheritance conduits.” It was the spirit, energy, commitment, and dedication of the early Muslims, men and women alike, that emancipated women from being playthings for people in power: men as a group defined by their common gender, and as male relations within a kinship (fathers, uncles, older brothers, etc.); wealthy people as an oppressive class; and officials as powermongers. All these prey on the powerless in society. Women, bearing as they do all of the physical burden and all of the various risks to life and health of the biological duty to produce more human beings, are merely the most vulnerable to such oppression, manipulation, and exploitation.

In a nutshell what can be ascertained from these *āyāt*? We learn that Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) are personalities with unsurpassed and superfine qualities. Their moral character is the best — period. No prophet would or could betray anyone, let alone his comrades-in-arms. Prophets (ﷺ) would never misappropriate what does not belong to them; however, even they need scriptural direction with

matters pertaining to the public or the “public interest.” No Muslim should ever entertain the idea or harbor the notion that Muhammad (ﷺ) would cheat when it comes to the leftovers of war. This has to be reinforced many times over. The reason is that a mental position exists among some Jews and Christians, backed up by erroneous passages in the Old and New Testaments, that prophets do nasty things. One prophet may wrestle with angels, another prophet may have sex with family members, another may have one of his commanders killed so as to marry his wife. All of this is nonsense. If prophets did such things they would not have been chosen by Allah (ﷻ) to be the recipients and transmitters of His revelation.

We also learn that this Qur’an and its rational vitality along with the demonstrated *sunnah* and the life-like presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) in our lives have brought about a historical and intellectual paradigm shift. Virtually the whole world has been extracted from derogatory descriptions of any behavior — usually traditional in origin — that has lost its rationale, if ever there was one, though still betraying a fear of the unknown. Examples include “knocking on wood” when mentioning one’s good fortune (a hidden reference to the cross); or regarding the sight of a magpie, a long tail black-and-white bird that utters a chattering call, as a bad omen when setting out on a journey. In ancient Roman religion, these types of superstitious behaviors referred to acts of excessive piety; later Christian clergy regarded superstitions, such as calendar customs or ringing church bells to avert thunderstorms, to be religious or quasi-religious acts, which they regarded as pagan or corrupt. Today, some groups or types of professions — actors, sailors, athletes — even after the Qur’an and the Prophet (ﷺ) ushered in the age of reasoning and rationality, are especially prone to superstitions, and that may be due to the insecurity of their occupations.

## The Muslims' Mistakes at Uḥud and the Flaws of the *Munāfiqs*

And do you, now that a disaster has befallen you after you had inflicted twice as much [on your foes], ask yourselves, "How did this happen?" Say, "It has happened because of your own selves." Verily, Allah has the power to will anything;

And all that befell you on the day when the two hosts met in battle happened by Allah's leave, so that He might mark out the [truly] committed, and mark out those who were tainted with dual allegiances and, when they were told, "Come, fight in Allah's cause," or "Defend yourselves," they answered, "If we had known [that it would come to a] fight, we would have indeed followed you."

They were closer to denying Allah, on that day, than they were to affirming Him, uttering with their mouths something which was not in their hearts, the while Allah knew full well what they were trying to hide — they who, having themselves held back [from fighting, later] said of their [fallen] brethren, "Had they but paid heed to us, they would not have been killed." Say, "Then avert death from yourselves, if what you say is true!" (3:165–168).

The question that was on the lips of many Muslims after the setback at Uḥud was, "How could something like this happen to us? How could we possibly be defeated? How could the *mushriks* win a war against us? What caused us to be disappointed and thwarted? This cannot be; we are Muslims. We should be invincible and unbeatable, especially when Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) is one of us."

And the answer in the words of scripture was: this comes from you. You caused this to happen. You — the Muslims — are responsible for this sad turn of events. You disobeyed, and this is what you got. You did not honor Muhammad's (ﷺ) orders to stay in your assigned positions and the tide turned against you. Surely, Allah



(ﷺ) does have the power to will anything; however He does not reward for failing commitment.

A materialistic “Islamic” psychology invites a *mushrik* military victory. In the heat of the battle the Muslim sharpshooters contravened the Prophet’s (ﷺ) command, being more interested in running for the loot than in maintaining their prophetically assigned positions; the consequences were catastrophic and the losses were staggering: almost one-tenth of the Muslim army was killed at Uḥud. Even the Prophet (ﷺ) himself was bruised, cut, knocked down, and bleeding.

With hindsight, the subliminal thoughts of these Islamic warriors were not up to the standard of an Islamic army. They speculated that the Prophet (ﷺ) may sell them short on the spoils of war. This latent psychological factor may have been the reason behind temporarily banning Muslim troops from taking prisoners of war; some of them may have been more concerned with the ransom attached to a prisoner of war than for the dignity of the prisoner’s life. The corrective Qur’anic *āyah* put an end to such impressions and personal beliefs, unfounded on proof or certainty. This cluster of *āyāt* shows how dangerously flawed human nature was on the frontline of Islam versus *kufr* at Uḥud.

Almost everyone among the Muslims had taken for granted they would win against the *mushriks* even if they were casual and slack in their attitudes and preparation. With some reflection they might have figured out that this major setback had occurred because they brought it upon themselves. First, most of them chose to leave Madinah without deference to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) preference. Once at Uḥud, the archers abandoned their posts prematurely. All of this added up to a disaster waiting to happen.

Just as a stone falls to earth when it is dropped, similarly a Muslim fighting force falls into disarray and defeat when it ignores the orders of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). Social laws are as irrevocable and as inescapable as physical laws, **“Truly, Allah has the power to overpower everything.”**

Muslims should rest assured that all the events leading up to and during the Battle of Uḥud happened because Allah (ﷻ)

decreed they should happen. Today's committed and struggling Muslims should realize that a military setback may have unseen advantages. This type of event can blow the deep cover off many who assume a public posture that is at odds with their inner thoughts and their deepest feelings. In circumstances like these, when life-and-death opportunities present themselves, it becomes possible to verify who will fight and who will not fight, who will obey orders and who will disobey, who will risk his life and who will run away, and who will fall for false information — such as the claim that the Prophet (ﷺ) was killed in action — and who will refute it. What on one level was defeat was also a sieve that separated the honest-to-God Muslims from the opportunists, the dual-loyalists, the faint-hearted, and the selfish. There were 300 Muslims who felt more comfortable with 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Sallūl than they did with Muhammad, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). There was no other procedure or screening process that would have forced the *munāfiqs* apart from the *mu'mins*. Uḥud was a blessing in disguise.

By the words of Allah (ﷻ), who diagnosed the dual-loyalists' psychology, these *munāfiqs* if they are summoned to fight and mobilize in a war for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) would reply, **“If we knew for sure that you are going to engage in combat duties we would follow you and fight with you. But we know that you will not be engaged in military clashes.”** These words betray their disloyalty to the Prophet (ﷺ) and their dual allegiance: the apparent allegiance to an Islamic state and their intense and aggravated allegiance against the Islamic state. They are skilled at playing with words, disguising their true intents, and undermining the facts and the truth. The *munāfiqs'* words-for-consumption fly in the face of reality; the concentration of *mushrik* forces and the dispatch of an Islamic armed force commanded by Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) is proof positive of imminent hostilities and an outbreak of warfare.

These Qur'anic and eternal words, **“If we but were certain [that it would come to a] battle, we would indeed follow you...”** are said to have been revealed to expose 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, who along with 300 others broke away from the Muslim army on its way to Uḥud. This was a blow to the show of force that would have

been projected had these “fifth columnists” not deserted. These *munāfiqs* by uttering, “If we were sure you were to fight...” positioned themselves in a domain that was closer to *kufr* than to *īmān*. When an Islamic state is threatened, when a Muslim population is in danger, it is no time under these circumstances for some “Muslims” to exempt themselves from military duty. Those who do so are in fact double-dealers, hypocrites, traitors, and impostors within the ranks of the committed Muslims. Uḥūd is an object lesson for all Muslims of all times in how to expose these incognito subversives. These types of turncoats cannot be considered among the Muslim rank and file as their behaviors and internal psychologies run counter to the *āyah*,

**[Know that truly] committed Muslims are only those who honor their commitment to Allah and His Apostle, and have left all doubt behind, and who strive hard in Allah’s cause with their possessions and their lives: it is they, they who are true to their word!” (49:15).**

Some scholars, in giving an explanation of this *āyah* of “proximity to *kufr*” (3:165), came out with an understanding that human nature may vacillate between a proximity to *kufr* and a proximity to *īmān*. But to pinpoint its meaning, the *āyah* must be properly contextualized by its reference to the treacherous behavior of the *munāfiqs*. There are some people who say what they do not mean; or they may express an idea that they do not internally honor. This sums up the mindset of the dual-loyalists.

The inexperienced Muslims of today have to absorb this hard-to-swallow fact: there are “Muslims” who pretend they are committed Muslims. They may even swear they are loyal, faithful, and will struggle to the very end. Their true character will not be revealed until they have the opportunity to prove themselves, that is, to go all the way to the combat lines of war and brave the life-and-death challenges there. We Muslims of today have been spared the consequences of being stung by *munāfiqs* time and time again, mainly because there is no Islamic power base virile enough to force them

out of the closet. We should enlist in the real-life experience of Muhammad (ﷺ), who taught us how to identify and how to verify these true *munāfiqs*.

When they said, **“If we were certain you [committed Muslims] are going to engage in warfare we would follow you,”** they knew there was a *mushrik* army on its way from Makkah to take revenge for its defeat at Badr. These *munāfiqs* knew the *mushriks* outnumbered the committed and struggling Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ). Anyone could deduce that war was imminent. But these renegades wanted to cover up their perfidy by trying to conceal what had in fact become public knowledge. For this reason Allah (ﷻ) remarks, **“And Allah knows their activity of keeping something secret better than anyone else.”** Their “classified information” amounts to a form of rejecting Allah (ﷻ) and working against the best interests of Islam and the committed, loyal Muslims. If these *munāfiqs* had any inclination toward the truth they would have realized their hidden agenda was not going to bear fruit in a growing Islamic society; the struggle of the sincere Muslims was uncovering and even unmaking them.

This was the way they behaved before Uḥud; but how did they present themselves at the conclusion of Uḥud? After the Muslims sustained a significant loss at Uḥud, giving up one-tenth of their brothers as *shahīds*, and after the remaining troops returned to Madinah, they heard these *munāfiqs* say, **“If only you had listened to us and not gone out to Uḥud those [Muslim soldiers] would not have been killed.”** This suggests that these *munāfiqs* wanted everyone to go back to Madinah at the time when they abandoned the Muslim troops on their way to Uḥud.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) left Madinah for Uḥud with a contingent of 1,000 men under arms. He promised them victory provided that they remain steadfast. After leaving Madinah, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy returned to Madinah with 300 of the original 1,000. This caption of reality was immortalized in scripture by these everlasting words, **“...they [who deserted the war effort] said of their [fallen] brethren, ‘Had they but paid heed to us, they would not have been killed.’”** Allah (ﷻ) then calibrated the response by telling

Muhammad (ﷺ) to, in effect, say to them: if staying behind and sitting at home is a means of security or a form of insurance against death, then it should be impossible for you to die, but you and we know that death is approaching you, even if you were in ivory towers; if what you, the *munāfiqs*, are saying is true then death can be averted and postponed.

What today’s Muslims have to bear in mind is that most of these *munāfiqs*, as far as what can be ascertained from Islamic historical records, were not suffering from any significant deficiencies in their ‘*ibādāt* (rituals). Some of them may have been praying in the front lines in the *masjid* immediately behind Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). But it does not always transpire that those who are in the front lines of *ṣalāh* will be in the front lines of *qitāl* (fighting) and jihad, as is so obviously demonstrated in the course of these *āyāt*. These people who say one thing and do another were closer to *kufr* than they were to *īmān*. *Īmān* and *kufr* here are measured by military decisions: the *munāfiqs* decided to withdraw from the Uḥud challenge and by that they incurred their notorious status of being closer to *kufr* than to *īmān*. This is a Qur’anic, not a human, definition.

These *āyāt* demonstrate how easy it is for those with dual or multiple loyalties to lie and to sidestep truth. It almost comes naturally to them to “act” as Muslims and react as *kāfirs*. Their true selves are revealed in their reaction; their mouths express what is not in their hearts.

They showed their hand when they commented on the death of their blood brethren, the *shahīds* of the Khazraj, who were their relatives, not just their brothers in faith, “...had they stayed in Madinah they would not have been killed.” The Qur’an answered them in effect: if what you say is true, then ward off death and have eternal life as you linger on in this city. The actual situation is that no amount of caution is going to delay or prevent death when death is decreed. Every soul dies when its time is up.

Obviously, the Yahūd were fascinated and transfixed by the results of Uḥud. They turned ambitious and covetous. They were waiting to settle scores for the “forced” evacuation of Banū

Qaynuqā'. Until the reversal for the Muslims at Uḥud, the remaining Jewish tribes in Madinah had become apprehensive that eventually they, too, would be forced to leave Madinah. Now that Uḥud had "taught the Muslims a lesson," these Yahūd felt that things were beginning to go their way. They were overjoyed, as their sympathies were with the *mushriks*. In fact, one of their own, Abū 'Āmir al-Rāhib, fought along side the *mushriks*. Later on, their misbegotten ambition led them to try and drop a large rock from one of their rooftops onto the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was in their neighborhood in Madinah. But Allah (ﷻ) saved him from that Yahūdī conspiracy. The average Muslim in Madinah had his doubts about these Yahūd who were so obvious in their private and public, spoken and unspoken hostilities toward the committed Muslims.

The words of *āyah* 3:165 are a comparison between the two military campaigns of Badr and Uḥud. The centerpiece of this juxtaposition is that the committed Muslims under the leadership of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) sustained heavy losses; 70 Muslim warriors were killed and scores were badly injured. On the day of Badr the committed Muslims had inflicted twice that on the *mushriks*, who had suffered from 70 deaths and another 70 taken as prisoners of war. Rounding it up, looking at Badr and Uḥud combined, the Muslims lost 70 and the *mushriks* lost 140.

Looking at the event in hindsight, it ought now to be clear that the Muslims after Uḥud should not have been asking why they were defeated and how they suffered such a disproportionate amount of war casualties. They should not have lamented how this could be when they were fighting for the campaign of Allah (ﷻ) and for His interest, how they could be defeated when they were Muslims, how they could be overcome when they have the Prophet (ﷺ) in their ranks and they have scripture descending upon them, and how the *mushriks* could appear to have won. These questions were quick on the tongues of the Muslims after Uḥud; closer consideration reveals that their defeat at Uḥud was due to their own intentions and actions. This defeat was generated within themselves; their archers decided to break with the orders of their commander-in-chief, Muhammad (ﷺ). One of the first

prerequisites of victory is for the military personnel to obey their commander — which in this case did not happen. Had they fulfilled their duties as assigned to them by Muhammad (ﷺ) they would have been Allah’s (ﷻ) team (*ḥizbullāh*); and “**...Allah’s team is always victorious” (5:56).**

The more we understand of the background of Uḥud the better we are equipped to assimilate the intents and purposes of these *āyāt* in our political and military development. This is why we have to recount the salient features that led to Uḥud, that unravelled at Uḥud, and that followed in the aftermath of Uḥud.

To sum up, some of the Islamic legal precedents that were set at Uḥud include:

1. recruits into the Islamic armed forces must not be less than 15 years old, with minor exceptions.
2. when a decision to go to war is taken there can be no rescinding that decision by the commander-in-chief.
3. private property may be transited by an Islamic army only in the climate of impending warfare.
4. Muslim combatants are allowed to yearn for death as martyrs during times of war.
5. a Muslim may not take his own life as a result of painful injuries sustained during a war.
6. *shahīds* (martyrs) are buried in the clothes they died in without the obligatory funeral bath, and at the place and location where they went down fighting.
7. *shahīds* do not get a *janāzāh* (funeral) prayer like other deceased Muslims; their status and honor have been secured and they are in no need of people’s prayers.
8. it is permissible to bury two or three martyrs in one grave.
9. if a Muslim accidentally kills another Muslim, a casualty of friendly fire, the ransom paid to the victim’s family is taken out of the Islamic State’s budget,
10. some individuals may have legitimate reasons for exemption from military service. This is a case by case decision. But even if they are “legally” exempt and they want to go to fight they should be permitted to do so within reason.

11. if an enemy invades or encroaches upon Islamic territory, Muslims are not required to react by fighting the enemy immediately. They would have to think out the appropriate war strategy.
12. *shūrā* is mandatory and is the basis for going to war. No one individual may impulsively plunge a society into war.

### Contrast between God-Affirmers and God-Deniers

- (3:169) But do not think of those who have been killed in Allah's cause as dead. No, they are alive! With their Sustainer do they have sustenance,
- (3:170) Exulting in the [martyrdom] that Allah bestowed upon them out of His bounty. And they rejoice in the glad tidings given to those [of their brothers] who have been left behind and have not yet joined them, that no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve;
- (3:171) They rejoice in the glad tidings of Allah's blessings and bounty, and [in the promise] that Allah will not fail to requite the committed Muslims,
- (3:172) Who responded to the call of Allah and the Apostle after misfortune had befallen them. A magnificent requital awaits those of them who have persevered in doing good and remained on their defense [against Allah's power to punish];
- (3:173) Those who have been warned by other people, "Behold, a horde has gathered against you; so beware of them [the horde]," whereupon this only increased their [the devoted Muslims] commitment, so that they answered, "Allah is enough for us; and how excellent a guardian is He!"
- (3:174) And [they] returned [from the battle] with Allah's blessings and bounty, remaining untouched by evil, for they had striven after Allah's goodly acceptance — and Allah is limitless in His great bounty.



وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أحيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَمْ يَمَسَّهُمْ شَيْءٌ سُوءٌ وَأَتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَلَا يَحْزَنكَ الَّذِينَ يَسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حِزًّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمَلِّ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُمَلِّ لَهُمْ لِيُزَادُوا إِثْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى

مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَمِيزَ الْخَيْثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى  
 الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِي مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَإِنْ  
 تَوَّابُونَ وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٩﴾

- (3:175) Certainly, it is but Satan who instills [into you] fear of his allies, so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are [genuinely] committed [to Me]!
- (3:176) And do not be saddened by those who compete with one another in denying Allah [His power]; verily, they can in no way harm Allah. It is Allah's will that they shall have no share in the [blessings of the] life to come; and immense suffering awaits them.
- (3:177) Indeed, they who have bought God-denial in exchange for God-adherence can in no wise way harm Allah; in the meantime torturous suffering awaits them.
- (3:178) And they should not think — they who are bent on denying Allah's power — that Our giving them rein is good for them. We give them rein only to let them grow in sinfulness; and shameful suffering awaits them.
- (3:179) It is not Allah's will [O you who deny His power] to abandon the committed Muslims to your way of life; [and] to that end He will set apart the bad from the good. And it is not Allah's will to give you insight into that which is beyond the reach of human perception; but [to that end] Allah elects whomsoever He wills from among His apostles. Commit, then, to Allah and His apostles; for if you commit and guard against Allah's power, a magnificent requital awaits you (Āl 'Imrān:169–179).

The tragedy of warfare is the fact that companions, compatriots, and comrades sacrifice their lives in the line of duty. The following *āyah*, **“But do not think of those who have been killed on a course to Allah as dead...”** was worded to respond to the loss of lives and the associated disconsolate human emotions felt in the course of the Battle of Uḥud. It is reported that Allah’s Apostle (ﷺ) said,

*When your brothers were inflicted and finished at Uḥud, Allah rendered their souls to dwell in the bosoms of green birds fluttering toward the rivers of paradise, enjoying its yields, and accommodated in golden lanterns in the shade of the Throne. Upon delighting in the luxury of tasteful food, refined drink, and affable reception, they said, “If only our brothers [the Muslim warriors back on earth] knew what Allah has done to us! And if they were to know, they would never abandon warfare [as a way of] fighting for the sake of Allah.” Then Allah responded by saying, “I will inform them for you.” And so He revealed this *āyah*, **“But do not think of those who have been killed in the path to Allah as dead...”**”<sup>334</sup>*

The indecisive nature of Uḥud had taken its toll on the average person. The Muslims did not score a decisive military victory and the *mushriks* were not roundly defeated; rather it appeared that the Islamic forces were thwarted and the *mushriks* were triumphant. The following *āyah* was the product of this reality,

**[They were the ones] who responded to the call of Allah and the Apostle after crisis had befallen them. A magnificent requital awaits those of them who persevered in doing what is right and who remained on their defense [against Allah’s power to punish] (3:172).**

In this cloudy and uncertain aftermath of Uḥud the Islamic morale was at an all-time low. Similarly on the other side, Abū Sufyān, the commander of the *mushriks*, was embattled and insecure; Allah (ﷻ) had unsettled his heart with an overwhelming

feeling of terror. Thus, the commander of the unfaithful, returned with his troops to Makkah. At this time Muhammad (ﷺ) said, “*Abū Sufyān [only] accomplished a partial success against you [the committed Muslims], for he [himself] retreated [toward Makkah] in a state of emotional terror.*”<sup>335</sup>

The Battle of Uḥud happened in the month of Shawwāl. Merchants and business people would normally come to Madinah in the month of Dhū al-Qa‘daḥ, the month after Shawwāl; some would locate at Badr al-Ṣuḡhrā (minor Badr). In this particular year these businessmen quirkishly came immediately following the Battle of Uḥud when the committed Muslims were still recovering from its aggravated conditions. They were complaining to themselves about this unhappy and uncertain aftermath. Just as they were getting ready to settle into trading, buying, and selling to escape from the shocking aftereffects of Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) called upon them to follow him in pursuit of the *mushrik* enemy. At this delicate moment of deep frustration inside the Muslim psyche — the loss at Uḥud along with the pull of the seductive money-making opportunity versus the higher call to military duty in the Muslim conscience — Satan caused the Muslims to dread any immediate and further military engagement with the *mushriks*. The circulating notion among these frightened Muslims was that virtually all people are against them, and that everyone has combined forces to defeat them.

But there were devoted and undaunted Muslims who would not succumb to this satanic notion. It was at this defining moment that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*I am going, even if no one goes with me.*”<sup>336</sup> Those, though, who responded to this military summons were ‘Alī, Abū Bakr, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, Abū ‘Ubaydaḥ ibn al-Jarrāḥ, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, Ḥudhayfaḥ ibn al-Yamān, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubādaḥ, Ṭalḥaḥ ibn ‘Ubaydillāh, and al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām along with around 70 other volunteers. All of these “beyond the call of duty” Muslims set out in pursuit of Abū Sufyān, the *mushrik* commander-in-chief. Once they reached a place called al-Ṣafrā’, it was in honor of these able, willing, committed and combatant Muslims that the above *āyah* was revealed, “**It was they**

who responded to the [military] call [of duty] from Allah and the Apostle...” (3:172).<sup>337</sup>

It is also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) deputized Imam ‘Alī and a temporary military force to pursue Abū Sufyān. On their way they were met by a nomad who informed them, “People have mobilized all their potential against you!” And they responded, “**Allah is enough for us; and how excellent a safekeeper is He!**” (3:173).<sup>338</sup>

In order for us to get a better understanding of these *āyāt* we would have to reconstruct their meaning within the human, historical, and social variables of that time, when scripture was dictated from on high. Our first concern here is to put these words of inspiration into their emotional and rational human context.

### Ghazwaḥ Badr al-Ṣuḡhrá (Badr Minor)

The following *āyah* is said to have been imparted from Allah (ﷻ) to man due to the psycho-military affair of Ghazwaḥ Badr al-Ṣuḡhrá,<sup>339</sup>

Those who have been warned by other people, “Behold, a horde has gathered against you; so beware of them [the horde],” whereupon this only increased their [the devoted Muslims] commitment, so that they answered, “Allah suffices us; and how excellent a source of trust He is!” (3:172).

The prelude to this battle began unfolding just as the engagement at Uḥud was ending. As Abū Sufyān was leaving the battlefield of Uḥud he had issued a challenge, which was accepted by the Prophet (ﷺ), to fight the Muslims at Badr the following year (see endnote 265). In that coming year, Abū Sufyān commandeered the folks of Makkah and set out on a journey until he reached a place called Mejannaḥ. It was at this time that fear overcame Abū Sufyān; as he considered returning to Makkah, he came upon Na‘īm ibn Mas‘ūd who was on his way to perform the ‘Umrah in Makkah. So Abū Sufyān asked him,

I assured Muhammad and his colleagues that I would meet them during the Badr time of year; but this year has been an unproductive and infertile year. We are better able to perform when the crops are plenty, the trees are blossoming, the cattle is milking and we are enjoying it all. But that is not the case this year, so I would rather retreat; however I would resent it if I were to go back and Muhammad were to come and find no one here! That would embolden them [the Muslims]. Go to Madinah and discourage them; and if you do so, I will give you ten camels to be retained with Suhayl ibn ‘Amr — which you will have when you accomplish your mission.

Na‘im then went to Madinah and found the Muslims gearing up for their showdown with Abū Sufyān and company. Na‘im, in Abū Sufyān’s confidence, said to the Muslims,

What you Muslims are doing is not the best thing to do; they [the *mushriks*] are intrusive and assertive by coming to meet you in your region. And you want to go out and take them on while they have amassed an awesome force. None of you will ever escape their staying power.<sup>340</sup>

Some of the listening Muslims started becoming inclined to Na‘im’s exhortations.

At this defining moment the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “By He Who has my soul in His Hand, I will go even if that means going alone.”<sup>341</sup> Then he set out for battle and with him were 70 mounted Muslim warriors who said, “**Allah is sufficient enough for us...**” After they eventually reached the agreed upon place, Badr al-Ṣughrá, the Prophet (ﷺ) and his fighting companions ended up waiting for eight days. And no one from the *mushriks* showed up. Abū Sufyān had returned with his army of 2,000 men under arms to Makkah. When the Muslims realized no military *mushriks* were around to battle them, they went about their “business” activity at Badr, buying and selling, paying dues, and bartering. Agricultural produce

was a major trade commodity, and it is said that the Muslims doubled their profits in those business deals. They went back to Madinah, profitable and prosperous.

One observation from this unfolding potential military flare-up, had it occurred, was that a small army of around seventy-odd Muslims — even though they were relatively well prepared for the fight as they were mounted on horses and camels — would have had to confront a much larger enemy numbering around 2,000. This once again speaks to the fact that the odds should never be the most important factor in determining whether a military duty should be canceled or aborted. The Prophet (ﷺ) was even willing to go by himself to this face-off against these Sufyānī *mushriks*. This affair also tells us there are psychological variables at work that we, the limited human Muslims, are not privy to — in this case the “terror factor” that took hold of Abū Sufyān and his cohorts. Is there an unspoken relationship between the absolute will of the Prophet (ﷺ) to press on with his military duties and the disintegrating will of Abū Sufyān to wage war? To suggest there is a definite correlation is uncertain; however from the unfolding of events we may rest assured that Allah (ﷻ) is present in this formula and when Muslims place their confidence in Him, He will not frustrate them. Simultaneously the enemies of Allah (ﷻ) will feel the consequences in the form of terror or in other forms that Allah (ﷻ) decrees.

These above *āyāt* are aligned with the *āyāt* that preceded them. Allah (ﷻ) had already alluded to the fact that there were “fifth columnists” within the Islamic society of Madinah. He enlightened all Muslims until the end of time that these dual-loyalists will try to frighten off and scare away combatant Muslims from their military duties. These *munāfiqs* said of the Uḥud war casualties, “Had they remained in Madinah they would not have been killed [at Uḥud].” The unanimous reply to them was, “Death occurs in conjunction with Allah’s (ﷻ) calculations and probabilities.” Here Allah (ﷻ) takes the world-bound humans to the realm of martyrs and their status. After this, no Muslim with sound judgement should be influenced by turncoats and squealers in Madinah or anywhere else they may happen to be in an Islamic state.

### Muslims are Immune to Scare Tactics

The *āyāt* frame human behavior in scriptural reference. When Na‘īm ibn Mas‘ūd al-Ashja‘ī, who had not yet become a Muslim, tried to take the wind out of the Muslims’ military sail in Madinah, there were Muslims who did not fall for this tactic. They were not impressed by his bolstering of Abū Sufyān and the 2,000 man army willing to fight until the bitter end. They were not fearful of Abū Sufyān’s “massive power” and they were not hesitant in engaging him. The spirit of the post-Uḥud Muslims emboldened them to accompany the Prophet (ﷺ) to whatever may result from a clash with the “superior” Makkan *mushriks*.

Contrary to Abū Sufyān’s expectations, the words of Na‘īm ibn Mas‘ūd had an opposite effect. The Muslims were willing to redouble their effort and intensify their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) because it was the power of Allah (ﷻ) these combatant Muslims were afraid of, not the power of man or the *mushriks*’ force. This should be a lesson for today’s Muslims who have slouched below the level of reality into a “can-do-nothing” attitude in the face of “superior” militaries that threaten “defenseless” Muslims from one corner of the earth to the other. There is another *āyah* in the Qur’an that reverberates with this meaning,

**And [so], when the committed [combatant] Muslims saw the confederates [advancing against them], they said, “This is what Allah and His Apostle have promised us! And truly spoke Allah and His Apostle!” And all this [military build-up against them] intensified their commitment and their readiness to yield themselves to Allah [even at the battlefield] (33:22).**

Coterminous with the *mushriks*’ and *kāfirs*’ belief in their obviously favorable military position is the less obvious and subtle high-quality position the committed Muslims are in when Allah (ﷻ) is on their side. They expressed this by saying, “**We are gratified that Allah is adequate for us and how perfect is He as a source of reliance.**” In other words they are saying that Allah (ﷻ) will take



on these “vastly superior” forces; or that when Allah (ﷻ) is with you, the odds are always in your favor. No one is better than Allah (ﷻ) as an administrator of this whole disparity. His support and help is what we are concerned with, and not the harassment and antagonism of the military *mushriks*. It is said that “...**ḥasbunā allāhu wa-ni‘ma al-wakil: Allah is ample for us and what an excellent confidant He is**” were the words uttered by Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) as he was thrown into the fire.<sup>342</sup> And Muhammad (ﷺ) said the same words when he was told that all the *mushriks* have “united” against you, are going to do war with you, and thereby you should fear them. In these life and death, threat and intimidation conditions, Muslims are expected by the standards of the Qur’an and Sīrah to rise to this state of mind and reiterate these comforting words. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said, “If you find yourselves in challenging and problematic circumstances, then say, ‘ḥasbunā allāhu wa-ni‘ma al-wakil.’”<sup>343</sup>

If we were to bring these meanings into today’s world, we would have to ask where are the committed Muslims who are taking on superior militaries while placing their trust in Allah (ﷻ)? Is there an Islamic leadership that is more concerned with the power of Allah (ﷻ) than it is with the nuclear, biological, and chemical force of man? And if that leadership does exist, does it have a Qur’anically generated program that will sustain war operations regardless of the temporary setbacks or the inconclusive military encounters resulting from a showdown between the Islamic and the *kāfir* militaries? It is Satan who peddles the idea and spreads the notion that fear should be the lot of Muslims who are fighting on the side of scripture, truth, justice, and peace. Na‘īm ibn Mas‘ūd was one individual who tried to dissuade the Muslim military from its call of duty. Today he has morphed into a global media, which actively tries to convince the live human embodiments of these meanings that they will be defeated. There is a worldwide war and an international coalition of forces that are ready to pounce on the few brave, committed, and combatant Muslims. So what is new? Nothing, really. We have seen this before. We have already experienced its equivalent. These *āyāt* are here to tell us about it.

It can only be Satan who tries to convince the self-assertive and unpacified Muslims that their military force is inferior, that their numbers are not comparable, and that they stand no chance. **“Indeed, [*mushrik*] people have combined their forces to defeat you; hence, you should be scared of them!”** This is a satanic statement that is intended to win the war before the first shot is fired. Thus, as their logic goes, no Muslims should seriously think about fighting “superpowers.” In our generation, primarily Israeli and American interests concoct these types of *shayṭānī* statements to defeat the Muslims at the psychological level. And they sugarcoat their anti-Qur’anic, anti-Islamic, and anti-Muhammadi intentions with nonsensical accusations suggesting that Muslims hate freedom, dislike free elections, or are hostile to Jews and Christians. Of course, any Muslim whose mind is fashioned by this holy Text knows that none of this pernicious propaganda is true. And whenever people with Muslim veneers and *kāfir* cores show up to erode Islamic morale as they did after the Battle of Uḥud we, the pledged and dedicated Muslims, should recall this experience and do double-duty in our steadfast opposition to the forces of Shayṭān. Satan is not just some metaphysical phenomenon; he is represented in our era by American corporate interests, the US military-industrial complex, and the collaboration of Zionists and right-wing evangelical Christians who have sold their faith for the glitter of gold.<sup>344</sup>

### **Historical *Mushriks* and Their Contemporaries**

The Makkan warlord Abū Sufyān and the American warlord Donald Rumsfeld along with their similar merchant/military backgrounds have something else in common: their hostility to and war strategies against Islamic self-determination.<sup>345</sup> The war against Islamic self-determination has come a long way. Rumsfeld, the American Secretary of War (during the George W. Bush administration, 2001–2004), and his ilk are the ideological descendants of Abū Sufyān’s *mushrik* Makkan military madness against the leadership of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the newly established Islamic order in Madinah. These ideological contemporaries of Abū Sufyān do not

dare say they are in a war against Islamic self-determination because they will “show their hand.” They say they are “fighting terrorists.” Abū Jahl, Abū Sufyān, and Abū Lahab, who were some of the most inveterate enemies of Muhammad (ﷺ), must be turning in their graves; how could they not have thought of branding Muslims of self-determination as “terrorists?” Listen to Rumsfeld, the “Makkan-Washingtonian,”

...President Bush has made clear that the only way to win today’s war is to carry the fight to the enemy and roll back the terrorist threat to civilization, “not on the fringes of its influence, but at the heart of its power.” He has it right. To understand why, one might consider what happened in Beirut two decades ago.

...And from that experience, terrorists learned important lessons: that terrorism is relatively low-cost and deniable and can yield substantial results at low risk and often without penalty. Terrorism can be a great equalizer — a force multiplier. And terrorism works in the sense that it can terrorize, and even a single attack can influence public opinion and morale and alter the behavior of nations.

...the way to defeat terrorists is to take the war to them — to go after them where they live and plan and hide, and to make clear to states that sponsor and harbor them that such actions will have consequences. That is what President Bush is doing in the global war on terrorism.

...Any person, organization, or government that supports, protects, or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent and equally guilty of terrorist crimes. [And] any outlaw regime that has ties to terrorist groups and seeks or possesses weapons of mass destruction is a grave danger to the civilized world — and will be confronted.”

...Yet consider: the explosive agent used on Sept. 11 was jet fuel. The danger we face in the 21st century is the

threat posed by terrorists armed not with jet fuel but with more powerful weapons. If the world does not deal with the emerging nexus between terrorist networks, terrorist states and weapons of mass murder, terrorists could one day kill not more than 240 people, as in Beirut, or more than 3,000 people, as on Sept. 11, but tens of thousands — or more.

...it is critical that our country recognize that the war on terrorism will be long, difficult and dangerous — and that as we deal with immediate terrorist threats, we also need to find ways to stop the next generation of terrorists from forming... To win the war on terror, we must also win the war of ideas — the battle for the minds of those who are being recruited by terrorist networks across the globe.<sup>346</sup>

No one could have spoken better for Abū Sufyān at Badr and Uhūd than Donald Rumsfeld. Madinah, in their offensive political lexicon would be a rogue state. Muslims of self-determination would be called terrorists, and Muhammad (ﷺ) would be the “mastermind” of this terrorism! The United States, at the instigation of Israel, is pulling together a worldwide alliance of nation-states to defeat Islamic self-determination. This is nothing new. Makkah, with the collusion of Yahūd, was putting together the *aḥzāb* (the regional confederation of forces) to, also, defeat Islamic self-determination.

And what did the pacesetting Muslims under the leadership of Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) do in such times? Did they think of having a Muslim lobby in Makkah? Did they contemplate having a Muslim pressure group in Persia or Rome? Did they seek an alliance of any kind with some other regional military force that would participate in their military encounters with the Makkan *kāfir* authority? They did nothing of the sort; and that was not because they were naive, inexperienced, or misled. At times of military threats such as the one outlined by the American Secretary of War — which, by the way, is a brilliant way of expressing how *mushriks* and *kāfirs* feel toward Muslims anytime Muslims assume their civic and military

duties — it is up to us, the committed Muslims, to authenticate our dependence on Allah (ﷻ). During crisis situations like the ones where Satan tried to convince the committed Muslims that they do not stand a chance against a *kāfir* Makkah 14 centuries ago, or a *kāfir* Washington in our generation, it is up to us to prove that we rely upon Allah (ﷻ). Reliance upon Allah (ﷻ) is not a matter of uttering words; it is a matter of making decisions. And the decision has already been made. Hence we had Badr, Uḥud, al-Khandaq, and Tabūk. When Allah (ﷻ) speaks, everyone should listen,

**Is not Allah enough for His subjects? And yet, they [the powers and forces inimical to Islam] would frighten you with those who are inferior to Him! But he whom Allah lets go astray can never find any guide, whereas he whom Allah guides aright can never be led astray. Is not Allah almighty, an avenger of evil?**

And thus it is [with most people], you may ask them, “Who is it that has created the heavens and the earth?” They will surely answer, “Allah.” Say, “Have you, then, ever considered what it is that you invoke [for help] instead of Allah? If Allah wills that harm should befall me, could those [inferior powers] remove the harm inflicted by Him? Or, if He willed that grace should alight on me, could they withhold His grace [from me]?” Say, “Allah fulfills me! In Him [alone] place their trust all who have trust [in His power existence].”

Say, “O my [truth-denying] people! Do all that may be within your power, [while] I, behold, shall press on [in Allah’s way]; in time you will come to know upon whom shall be visited [in this world] suffering that will cover him with ignominy, and upon whom long-lasting suffering shall alight [in the life to come]!” (39:36–40).

Allah’s (ﷻ) restorative words are meant for the secure Muslims who are able to assume their worldly responsibilities in light of these inspiring *āyāt*. These life-giving *āyāt* are to be read and under-

stood within the military context to which they belong. It will be difficult, if not unrealistic, to comprehend the lessons from a military experience called Badr or Uḥud (among others) if we are unwilling to associate these scriptural words to the facts on the ground for which the *āyāt* were revealed; or if we are reluctant to enliven Allah's (ﷻ) tidings and groundbreaking news with the circumstances and practical details they speak to. Our affirmation of Allah (ﷻ) shall never be a singular verbal statement by which we think we reach salvation or redemption. Our affirmation of Allah (ﷻ) is when we have confidence in His power, when we trust in His judgment, and when we rely on His counsel. It is at times of war that we have the opportunity to prove whether we are true to our convictions or whether we want to run away from our duties. There are plentiful instances throughout the noble Scripture that reiterate the involvement, engagement, participation, and interlocking of Allah (ﷻ) in our military endeavors. A few military-specific and confidence-boosting *āyāt* are cited below — but only for those who are willing to affirm Allah (ﷻ) at the battlefield,

**...and Allah will most certainly sustain him who sustains His cause, for verily, Allah is most powerful (22:40).**

**Behold, We shall indeed support Our Apostles and those who are [in times of combat] committed to Allah, [both] in this world's life and on the Day when all the witnesses shall stand up — the Day when the oppressors' excuses will avail them not, seeing that their lot will be rejection from all that is good, and a woeful hereafter (40:51–52).**

**O you who are [in times of combat] committed to Him! If you help [the cause of] Allah, He will help you, and will make your steps steady-going (47:7).**

**[For] Allah has thus ordained, "I Shall most certainly prevail [at times of war], I and My Apostles!" (58:21).**

### What Happens to Muslims Who Die for Allah’s (ﷻ) Cause?

These *āyāt* are in courtesy to the Uḥud *shahīds*. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that even though the casualties seem to have lost their physical life in this world, the fact of the matter is that they are alive, living, and possessing life in the afterworld. Even though the *āyāt* talk directly to the Prophet (ﷺ), they are nonetheless meant for everyone else. Paraphrasing the *āyāt*, it could be said that some of the Muslims were discouraged by the volatile and disloyal *munāfiqs* who were imputing the war fatalities could have been averted if the Muslims would have stayed put in Madinah instead of going out to Uḥud where they perished. Rather, Allah (ﷻ) is saying: be certain of a different reality. These martyrs are surviving and existing prosperously in another world. They are in close proximity to their Sustainer. They bypassed the accountability phase that normally precedes access to paradise. They are living like everyone else. They eat and they drink which is another way of saying that they are full of life. They also are not dislocated from the Islamic order for which they physically can no longer be available; but they remain interactive with it in ways that are known to Allah (ﷻ).

The martyr’s proximity to Allah (ﷻ) is not necessarily a proximity of distance, place, or position as much as it is a proximity of dignity, honor, and status. The lives of martyrs as declared by the Qur’an are metaphysical, post-worldly, and beyond the reckoning of immediate human senses. We have no sensual perception of it except what Allah (ﷻ) in these eternal Qur’anic words is telling us. Thus the last sentence in *āyah* 3:169 reiterates the fact that the martyrs are in the dignified presence of their Sustainer who maintains their upkeep and livelihood.

It will not be easy for us human beings to settle down to the fact that someone who has physically died is still very much alive. The actuality that those who die for the cause of Allah (ﷻ) are the only ones who qualify to stay alive is a fact that does not easily sink in. But it is true and scripturally documented. And if these *shahīds* are alive, why would anyone want to mourn them? They are alive. Life, in a sense, is a cycle, or a periodically repeated sequence of events. And who are we to say that dying for the cause of Allah

(ﷻ) will not immediately generate a better life, a higher quality of living, and an enhanced form of existence? This is left up to Allah (ﷻ) who is in ultimate charge of life and death. And here when lives are physically terminated at the battlefield, it is the originator of life itself — Allah (ﷻ) — who replaces that worldly life with one far superior to it as an instant reward for the Muslims' unmitigated selflessness in making the ultimate sacrifice. After all, was it not Allah (ﷻ) who initially gave life to the heroes that sacrificed their lives in Allah's (ﷻ) cause?

Death itself is not the end all. Death, in material and empirical terms, is the act of dying, the end of life, the total and permanent cessation of all the vital functions of an organism. But who can state with certainty that once the physical and bodily functions of life are gone that the life essence of that individual is also terminated and finished? This cessation of biological and physiological bodily functions does not mean the human soul that once occupied a particular body has expired or withdrawn from existence altogether. Death is not the end result of life; it is merely a state of change from one expression of life to another.

In this new life, the martyrs are delighted to experience the heavenly abundance and luxury. They realize they are receiving "preferential treatment." They also are cheerful and jubilant about their "comrades-in-arms," their *mujāhid* brothers, who have not yet gained the honor of dying for the vantage and quest of Allah (ﷻ) — *fi sabilillāh*. It is enough to know that the *mujāhids* are on the course of martyrs, following in their footsteps, and may some day be honored with the distinction, status, and prestige of becoming a *shahid*.

The good news is that Allah (ﷻ) will never forfeit the compensation of those who are securely committed to Him, those who are willing to struggle for His campaign, and those who, in His cause, ultimately achieve the grandness of martyrdom. This is the *ni'mah* (the premium, abundance, and generosity) with which Allah (ﷻ) favors these dedicated souls: perpetual life and everlasting provisions, uninterrupted by fear of what may come or regret for what has passed. **They are neither grieved nor are they saddened!** (3:170). This is an obvious urging from Allah (ﷻ) to His devotees



that they should struggle and express a desire for the dignity and celebrity of martyrdom.

One approach to better understanding the meanings of these *āyāt* today is to consider the martyrs who passed on — but are still alive — during the imposed imperialist and Zionist war against the Islamic awakening in Iran. In the course of this *kāfir-imposed* war, there were hundreds of thousands of martyrs who passed on to the proximity of Allah (ﷻ). These modern-day Islamic combatants performed their military duties with full confidence in Allah (ﷻ), unquestionable reliance upon Him, and the certitude that Allah (ﷻ) is with them. They knew that no other power on earth could interfere with their attachment to the power of Allah (ﷻ). And who could have predicted that in the first generation following the martyrs, less than 20 years after the valiant war effort, the two main antagonists — the rulers in Baghdad and the rulers in Washington who brought together a combination of regional and international nation-states — would be at war against themselves while the martyrs would be looking down from heaven upon this development that defies logic.

These *āyāt* describe a military level of responsibility pertaining to the Battle of Uḥud as well as its two ensuing military campaigns to thwart Abū Sufyān and his legions: Ghazwaḥ Ḥamrā' al-Asad and Ghazwaḥ Badr al-Ṣuḡhrā. Muslim troops were physically injured and psychologically bruised at Uḥud but still some of them had the courage, the motivation, and the resolve to fight on and die for the blessings of Allah (ﷻ). These dedicated and fighting Muslims wanted to trail the Makkan enemy, and in doing so, challenged all the rumors and propaganda that made the Makkans seem invincible. They proved to themselves, to the *kāfirs*, to the world then and now, that they had the requisite confidence in Allah (ﷻ) to work His will.

The fact, as elucidated in these *āyāt*, is that the martyrs have not been separated from their combatant comrades — they convey glad tidings for those warriors who have not become martyrs yet: do not fear and do not grieve. In one sense, the martyrs are like a catalyst that facilitates a pending victory for the Muslims

who are fighting injustice and oppression on earth — a perfectly legitimate war by the standards of heaven and the standards of rational men. The more martyrs there are, the more accelerated the pending victory is.

The project of dismantling Israeli Zionist oppression still awaits an Islamic base that is willing to transform its warriors into martyrs in an unrelenting series of wars that see the Islamic forces offering no limitations on the number of martyrs. This quality and quantity of sacrificing servicemen are required to cleanse our history from lethargy, cleanse our souls from indolence, cleanse our societies from indifference, cleanse our territories from occupation, and cleanse our governments of despotism.

Often it is rather difficult to convince people without power that they will eventually defeat their enemies. And Muslims are people. Muslims, like all other people, are subject to the same weaknesses. But the difference is that Muslims ought to be sure they have a heavenly responsibility, which only they can shoulder. And they also ought to be sure that when they are on Allah's (ﷻ) side, Allah (ﷻ) is on their side. But these Muslims are part of a larger world that seeks to challenge Allah's (ﷻ) power and authority, and thus are not left alone to ferment these ideas and feelings on their own.

The following important points may be distilled out of the above *āyāt*, 3:169–175,

1. The highest prestige and honor are due to those who are not psychologically defeated, who persist and fight back bravely, and then die in the course of battle. These high-achievers are called *shahīds* (martyrs).<sup>347</sup> And we are informed by this eternal Book that they are honored by the dignity of being in the presence of Allah (ﷻ). They live on in Paradise where they receive nourishments, food, and refreshments. Their lives are as lively as anyone who is committed to Allah (ﷻ) in this world, even though their dead bodies are buried; but ever since they were honored with *shahādah* they have been “taken care of and provided for.” It would be as if they never experienced death, the event of dying and departing life.<sup>348</sup>

2. Are *shahīds* to be given a funeral bath and service as other deceased Muslims? The most pervasive legal opinion is that a *shahīd* does not receive a ritual cleansing, he is not placed in a shroud, and he does not receive the *janāzah* prayer. If there is on the body a *najāsah* (impurity) besides the blood it should be wiped off. There is a consensual comment on the authority of Jābir that relates the Prophet (ﷺ) ordering the *shahīds* of Uḥud to be buried with their blood spots; he did not wash them, neither did he offer them the *janāzah* supplication.<sup>349</sup>

But in the case of a soldier who fights in the cause of Allah (ﷻ), who gets mortally wounded but does not die at the battlefield, who is then taken for medical care and nourishment, and who, hours or days later, dies at a hospital or clinic, he is to receive the *janāzah* invocation.<sup>350</sup>

3. Dying for the cause of Allah (ﷻ) and bearing witness to His presence and power in such a way is the most rewardable act of yielding to and obeying Allah (ﷻ). This human action is enough to shed sins and redeem life. Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said, "Dying for the cause and on the way to Allah absolves a person of everything except debt."<sup>351</sup> This says plenty about the rewards of martyrdom and it also says volumes about other peoples' personal rights and dues.
4. The *shahīds* may have lost their physical bodies by dying at the war front, but all the needs and requirements of that body are fulfilled. They eat and drink, they enjoy the attractions of life and they are conscious of their comrades-in-arms who are still back on earth trying to gain the same honor. A *shahīd* receives many benefits, some of which are,
- he is forgiven the instant he parts life,
  - he is able to visualize his place in heaven,
  - he bypasses the torment of the grave,
  - he is spared the preponderant shock preceding the Day of Judgment,
  - he wears a crown,
  - he/she may choose to have flirtatious, ecstatic, and erogenous times, and
  - he may intercede for tens of his folks and relatives.

5. Those who gave 110% — even though many of them were still in physical pain and injury due to the effects of Uḥud and accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) in hot pursuit of the Makkans after they left Uḥud — were singled out for their honorable and “beyond the call of duty” services.
6. Allah’s (ﷻ) shining words about the committed Muslims, who were not fooled by propaganda representing the enemy as superior, awesome, and invincible, tell us that commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and cowardice cannot coexist in the heart and soul of a *mu’min*. Cowardice and commitment cannot be coalesced in the Muslim psyche. Reducing cowardice to its basic elements reveals a fear of death and a solicitation of worldly life. These are not characteristics of a committed and combatant Muslim. In the war history of Muhammad (ﷺ) there was no sign of timidity or trepidation. There was only the fearless, undaunted, and indomitable vigor of Muslim men-under-arms for the sake of Allah (ﷻ).
7. A committed Muslim’s reply whenever the enemy of Allah (ﷻ) goes into high-gear psychological warfare is to say, **“Allah’s power satisfies me and He is the best One to have my allegiance and confidence” (3:173).**
8. If ever there is fear it should be the fear of Allah (ﷻ) and not the fear of His enemies. People of Allah (ﷻ) never fear Shayṭān, especially when this Shayṭān is trying to instill the fear. The ones taken in by Satan’s power illusions are the dual-loyalists, who pretend to be Muslims, but when called upon to militarily prove their commitment, side with the *kāfirs* and sympathize with the *mushriks*.

Human nature harbors a constant element of fear. And when this human nature is not developed, cultured, and directed by Allah (ﷻ) then a variety of fears serve to oppress that human nature. There are some men who fear simply because of an anticipation of things going wrong. Others react to fear in a way that may bring like-minded individuals together to ward off a particular source of fear. Men in other societies and conditions may be able to turn psy-

chological fear into “material safety.” Still fear, to some people, is intertwined with ignorance or uncertainty. Sometimes fear is generated by a perception of inferiority and a mental uneasiness. In primitive ways fear induces images of superiors and even “gods.”

Fear itself is exhausting; the feeling is draining. The range of emotions and subliminal thoughts hovering around fear is fertile ground for Satan. And all these multi-directional notions of fear thrive in a mind and heart that are void of Allah (ﷻ). But when a person is emotionally attached to Allah (ﷻ) and mentally fulfilled by Allah (ﷻ) then there can be only one fear: Allah’s (ﷻ) corrective action. When committed Muslims live with the constant expectation that Allah (ﷻ) will “impose” His power on their lives at some point due to a deviation away from His command and counsel, they can channel this same fear to preempt any painful heavenly corrective measure in the course of human social development. It may be to this end that Allah (ﷻ) says, **“They fear their Sustainer high above them, and do what they are enjoined to do” (16:50).**

### Rebutting the *Kāfirs* and Their Intimidations

The last *āyah* in this section, represented a little bit differently in the variable translation below,

**It is not Allah’s will [O you who deny His power] to abandon the committed Muslims for your way of life; [and] to that end He will differentiate the malicious from the beneficent. And it is not Allah’s will to have you privy to the *ghayb*; but [to that end] Allah consecrates whomever He wills from among His apostles. Commit, then, to Allah and His apostles; for if you commit, and guard against Allah’s power, a glorious compensation awaits you (3:179).**

sheds light on an event in the Prophet’s (ﷺ) life that accompanied the military campaign at Uḥud. In the aftereffects of the war, the Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said, “My *Ummah* was exhibited to me

in its feature as it was exhibited to Adam. I was advised of he who will share in the commitment to Allah and of he who will deny it.”<sup>352</sup> When this sentence was relayed to the *munāfiqs* they made fun of it by saying, “Muhammad claims to know who shares a commitment to Allah and who rejects it; while we are with him and he does not know who we are.” It was to this dynamic that the *āyah* was revealed.

Parallel to this was another incident in which Quraysh said, “O Muhammad! You claim that whoever disagrees with you is going to the Fire and incurs Allah’s wrath the while whoever follows and enlists into your *dīn* will go to Paradise and enjoy Allah’s explicit approval. So, then, tell us, ‘Who are the ones who are committed and who are the deniers?’” And the above *āyah* was a direct response to this attitude and mentality. It is also believed that some committed Muslims came to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) inquiring about a distinctive mark that would distinguish a committed Muslim from a counterfeit Muslim (*munāfiq*) and the above *āyah* served as an answer to their inquiry.<sup>353</sup>

Once again we need to remind ourselves that these *āyāt* were a direct and informative narrative about the Uḥud war effort. The course of the battle did not go as expected for the Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims. It is normal and natural for Muhammad (ﷺ) to have felt the brunt of the military reversal as he was the prime target of the heightened rhetoric coming from the Makkan *mushriks* under the command of Abū Sufyān. The Prophet’s (ﷺ) personal dilemma was further complicated by the *mushriks*’ connections inside of Madinah with their *munāfiq* cheering sections and Yahūdī stealth supporters. During this unsettling time, it meant a lot to have Allah (ﷻ) speak to the Prophet (ﷺ) directly. All these “booming and roaring” forces were unable to harm the trustees of Allah (ﷻ) — the Prophet (ﷺ) and his fighting companions. Now as then, at the end of the day, these rambunctious loudmouths are harming only themselves as they are, in fact, in a war with Allah (ﷻ). They are actively incurring Allah’s (ﷻ) hostility and therefore their strategies, plans, and actions will boomerang all the way into the hellfire. These *kāfirs*’ war against the committed Muslims, combined with their destruction of the productivity of their soci-

eties in this world, practically proves that they do not deserve the fruits of the coming world.

**Their's is arrogant behavior on earth, and they [are the ones who] devise evil arguments [against Allah's messages]. Yet [in the end], such evil scheming will engulf none but its authors; and can they expect anything but [to be made to go] the way of those [criminals] of olden times? (35:43).**

These heart-bending *āyāt* in this factual Scripture were not meant to be frozen in time; they were not meant to be only applicable to the words and insinuations of the Arabian Makkan establishment 1,400 years in past history. They are also meant to be applied to today's version of Abū Sufyān's propaganda machine: the worldwide anti-Islamic media leviathan whose high-fidelity transmitters broadcast the constant message that Muslims are incapable of standing on their own and walking an independent God-given course in life. The United States government, for one among many, controls radio, TV, and journalistic instruments that are clever at sabotaging Islamic confidence at its roots. The United States "Information Agency" (USIA), before it was subsumed into the US State Department, was responsible for the administration of US information and cultural programs in foreign countries. The best-known USIA operations are the Voice of America (VOA) and the Fulbright Scholarship Exchange Program.<sup>354</sup> The VOA broadcasts a variety of programs with an aversion to analyzing the fact that Islamic self-determination is a reality throughout Asia and Africa; the Fulbright Program has provided for the exchange of thousands of professors and students with countries all over the world, especially countries that are primed for an Islamic revival. The ones who pose innocently as academics, aid workers, and missionaries are working undercover for American intelligence gathering operations and resocialization programs.

These governmental instruments of communication, information control, and publicity management are meant to erode or deter

Islamic self-determination. They are the opening salvo in the arsenal of US tactics and tricks that together constitute American psychological warfare around the world. One of the main unstated objectives is to turn world public opinion against ideological Islam, against Islam as an economic order, and against the right of Muslims to be free of American supported monarchies, Western client regimes, and ruling classes who genuflect in front of Zionists and imperialists. Activities include round-the-clock radio broadcasts in scores of languages, television programs, publicizing of “professionally made” documentaries that penetrate virgin minds with the supremacy position of the imperialist West, marketing of feature and newsreel films, and distribution of leaflets, pamphlets, news bulletins, and related propaganda materials.<sup>355</sup>

In our day and age the US government is leading the *kāfir* charge in the world. They think the abundant wealth at their disposal and the masses of people at their beck-and-call are godsend. Little do government functionaries realize they are setting themselves up for their grand undoing. All empires have trespassed into the forbidden zone from where a return to dominance is impossible; they have all taken the same route to ruin, self-destruction, popular discontent, and military shock-and-awe,

**Indeed, they who have bought God-denial in exchange for God-adherence can in no wise way harm Allah; in the meantime torturous suffering awaits them. And they should not think — they who are bent on denying Allah’s power — that Our giving them rein is good from them. We give them rein only to let them grow in sinfulness; and shameful suffering awaits them (3:177–178).**

These government officials are so intoxicated with power that they have lost their sense of justice. Justice itself has become self-centered and self-serving. Where is the meek Muslim or the submissive scripturalist who can talk to these “officials on a pedestal?” Who dare go with these defying Qur’anic and divine words to the



pharaoh in the White House and tell him along with his power-inebriated consultants that they are clearly on a course to Hell!!

Little do these high and powerful worldly figures know that Allah (ﷻ) will interfere, as He has done many times in history, and pull down their whole establishment until it is buried under the rubble of historical facts. Despite all of its grandiose “super” power, it will finally succumb, as it must, to His social regulations and good-time laws. And if a simple Muslim finds this task too demanding, he need not grieve himself to death for Allah (ﷻ) says to this quandary,

**Hence, leave Me to the one who disputes this discourse;  
We shall gradually demote them, step by step, without  
their perceiving how it has all come about... (68:44).**

### **Differentiating the Malevolent from the Benevolent**

We Muslims do have our share of sycophants, spongers, and spaniels who are smitten by the military might and the technological twinkle of governments and establishments in America and Europe. Their blinders are too opaque to see that these governments are gun-ready to exterminate populations (as was done to the American Indians), or relocate masses of people (as was done to the Palestinians), or drop nuclear weapons to annihilate cities and urban centers (as was done in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan). And Allah (ﷻ) knew that we would have this contingent of people, so He provided us with eye-opening and conscience stimulating Qur’anic documents. Listen,

**And do not let their [the deniers of Allah] growth of  
wealth and [the happiness that they may derive from]  
their fertility rate excite your admiration; Allah but  
wants to castigate by these means in [the life of] this  
world, and [to cause] their souls to depart while they  
are [still] in denial of the truth [of Allah’s pragmatic  
power] (9:85).**

The major problem with established and worldly-centered organized state power is that it becomes a dupe of its own prosperous ego. When there is a tremendous and “unprecedented” accumulation of money, a population base that is working hard for its material gain, and a military that is threatening other societies and countries, the aura and allure of such a splendiferous concentration of wealth, power, and potential can even beckon Muslims, who should know better. Allah (ﷻ) is breaking through this attraction barrier and advising His devout subjects that this abundant wealth and concentration of power is not indicative of a favor from Allah (ﷻ). In this instance, there is a larger social law from Allah (ﷻ) at work: man in his social construct will encounter — sooner or later — the results or repercussions of affirming Allah (ﷻ) or denying Him. A “superpower” structure or status is hostage to its own God-defined labor and strategy. Nevertheless a short-lived pharaoh, president, king, or emperor (short-lived if his individual lifespan is compared with the extended life of his particular society) and his consultants, who are detached from the social laws of Allah (ﷻ), will immediately think that their empire, conglomerate, coalition, or alliance will survive any economic disturbances, social upheavals, and natural disasters. And this elitist psychology induces the administrators of modern nation-states and “civilized” societies to act with vanity, arrogance, self-love, and scorn. This self-aggrandizing attitude, which effectively characterizes most of the highest governmental and financial executives in the land, leads them to an unacknowledged or undeclared war against Allah (ﷻ). And from here on, the rest becomes the history of fallen and forgotten civilizations.

Turning to listening Muslims, Allah (ﷻ) counsels them that life will present them with uneasy challenges and difficult circumstances; but these are meant to verify who is for Allah (ﷻ) and who is against Him. Uḥud is one of the prime examples of how Allah (ﷻ), through apparently hard times, shows the truth about people, their core thoughts and their deeply held convictions. Uḥud, besides its military details, was a psychological testing ground. It separated those affirming Allah’s (ﷻ) power all the way

to the battleground from those denying His power as they abandoned a war in progress. The affirmation of Allah’s (ﷻ) power required perseverance as exemplified by Muslims committed to Allah (ﷻ) through war. The denial of His power was demonstrated by the *munāfiqs* whose actions of desertion betrayed their allegiance to the established Arabian powers of the time: *mushriks*, *kāfirs*, and Yahūd. Echoing this meaning is another *āyah*,

**And most certainly We shall discipline you [through the ordeals of life], so that We might mark out those of you who struggle hard [in Our cause] and are patient in affliction; for We shall put to a test [the truth of] all your assertions (47:31).**

The day of Uḥud should go down in history as the day on which Allah (ﷻ) offered the committed Muslims, who were the willing instruments of Allah’s (ﷻ) power in war, the opportunity to discover with certainty who the *munāfiqs* among them were. As the combat-willing Muslims were displaying their dedication, patience, perseverance, and obedience to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), they were at the same time lifting the curtain on the *munāfiqs* lodged inside the Muslim rank and file. These disloyal and erratic elements had finally surfaced. Their perfidy and betrayal of trust in Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) were now no longer disguised and incognito.

Some inexperienced or simpleminded people would think that faithful Muslims and faithless Muslims should be exposed by revelation. This trend of wishful thinking would want Allah (ﷻ) to point to the substandard and treacherous Muslims by having the God-centered Muslims privy to the *ghayb* (the intangible). And Allah (ﷻ) quickly answers these types by saying He does not have ordinary people gain access to the *ghayb*. Rather man is created by Allah (ﷻ) and during life on earth he struggles to achieve his objectives. Through this conscious struggle, as he uses his rational faculties to fine-tune the information gathered by his senses with the faultless guiding knowledge from Allah (ﷻ), man acquires the

understanding that helps him along his energetic path to achieve something. Part of this understanding is a recognition of who can be counted on to do the right things and who cannot.

This, however, does not imply that prophets and apostles do not have limited access to the imperceptible; they do, by Allah's (ﷻ) entitlement,

**He [alone] knows that which is beyond the reach [of a created being's perception], and to no one does He disclose any of the mysteries of His unfathomable knowledge, unless it be to an apostle whom He has been pleased to elect [therefore]... (72:26–27).**

And if Allah (ﷻ) does disclose to His apostles the character or attitude of a particular person, it is not done to take away from the human experience and necessity of discovering the social laws that Allah (ﷻ) has enacted in our lives. The standard in life, as outlined and explained throughout this holy Text, is to hold people up to the knowledge and outcomes of their behavior as the circumstances may merit. The standard is not for people to passively sit back and wait for Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) to prejudge a person irrespective of his behavior, record, or opportunity to prove his willingness or unwillingness to observe Allah's (ﷻ) orders and instructions.

From another perspective we may say that before Uḥud the commitment character of many verbal Muslims was unknown (*ghayb*). But when Uḥud became a military duty and responsibility this unknown depth of character surfaced. The public could now plainly see, beyond any doubt, the behavior of those who were true and sincere and those who were hollow and unreliable.

With all this in mind, our conscious commitment to Allah (ﷻ) can only be solidified by actualizing in our lives the living Sunnah of Muhammad (ﷺ) and its practical implications. When Muhammad (ﷺ) went through the preparations, the inconveniences and concerns, the components and dimensions, the substance and problems — all put together to give us the historical narrative of Uḥud — he did all that to teach us by his living example how to conduct warfare.

And there was an indirect response to the *kāfirs* who were asking Muhammad (ﷺ) to show them who is committed to Allah (ﷻ) and who is opposed to Him. The answer was not the one they expected; nor was it one the Muslims themselves expected. The answer was that the demanding tasks of proving Allah’s (ﷻ) power at the war front will reveal who a true Muslim is and who a false Muslim is.

**It is not Allah’s will [O you who deny His power] to abandon the committed Muslims to your way of life; [and] to that end He will set apart the bad from the good. And it is not Allah’s will to give you insight into that which is beyond the reach of human perception; but [to that end] Allah elects whomsoever He wills from among His apostles. Commit, then, to Allah and His apostles; for if you commit and guard against Allah’s power, a magnificent requital awaits you (3:179).**

An important observation should be noted here. There are many times in this instructive Qur’an when Allah (ﷻ) couples the word *ṣalāh* with *zakāh*. And there are many times when He couples the word *īmān* with *taqwā*. And still there are many times when He couples a *jihad* that refers to expending monies with a *jihad* that refers to sacrificing lives.

With Uḥūd as a backdrop, where the Muslims were expected to give their lives for Allah (ﷻ) — as this expression of commitment was sufficient to involve Allah (ﷻ) in a power presence at the war front — they were also supposed to understand that in addition to the generous sacrifice of life, there should similarly be a more than generous contribution of finances for Allah’s (ﷻ) cause. When wealthy and prosperous Muslim individuals, merchants, and businessmen begin to withhold money and resources in these types of war conditions, they should never think they are doing the right thing. Stockpiling money is never a virtue, even when an Islamic society is not at war; imagine how destructive it is to be miserly at a time when duty calls. Some materialistic minds cannot get over the notion that giving is a way to poverty and that generosity leads

to destitution. The fact as stated here is that stinginess is detrimental to individuals and society at times of peace *and* at times of war, in this world *and* in the concluding one. When there is an individual or social need there should be an individual and social fulfillment of that need. Failure to institutionalize this dynamic contributes to the bankruptcy of that society.

Looking at it another way, the hoarding of wealth is a conduct that attracts reactive acts of theft, piracy, fraud, and social tension between the haves and have-nots in society. Class consciousness is the offensive outcome of a few who keep getting richer and the many who keep getting poorer. As such a behavior takes hold in countries and regions, it gives rise to ideas and theories that justify the use of force for the sake of wealth confiscation, reallocation, and distribution. In the same way a wealthy person throws God out of his conscience to make more money, a poor society throws God out of its environment to survive.

### Soothing the Prophet's (ﷺ) Heart After Uḥud

The words of Allah (ﷻ) to His Prophet (ﷺ) are calming, soothing, and consoling. These are the best assurances to follow the agony and vexation that came out of Uḥud, as the Muslim warriors were disoriented and the *mushriks* were elated. It really hurts when people of truth and virtue are “cornered and cowed” while people of fickleness and infidelity feel buoyed and victorious. There is a nagging question that persists in such conditions, “O Allah! Why has the *ḥaqq* been dealt a blow while the *bāṭil* seems to have survived? Why are the committed Muslims at a loss and the deniers of Allah (ﷻ) at an apparent gain? Why do not people of truth, honesty, and God overcome every time they clash with people of perfidy, crime, and aggression?” This scenario is enough to shake the foundations of faith and the conviction of champions. And yet this happened on the day of Uḥud when the committed and fighting Muslims asked, “***Annā hādihā: But how could this have happened?***” (3:165).

In this final treatment of the subject there comes an answer that comforts these disquieted hearts and troubled thoughts. When

the forces of imperial falsehood score a limited victory here or there, this does not mean that Allah (ﷻ) has let them “get away with it,” or that these imperial and aristocratic forces are beyond reproach, or that these monarchical and lordly militaries can cripple or impair the forces of *ḥaqq* forever or for the foreseeable future.

Likewise, when the forces of truth and justice are hurt and bruised in one showdown, this does not mean that Allah (ﷻ) has forsaken them, or that Allah (ﷻ) will abandon them to the vicious forces of tyranny and criminality. This is not the way to interpret, infer, or understand the debacle at Uḥud. These unfavorable physical circumstances and consequences have been calculated by Allah (ﷻ) for reasons that are immediately confusing but become clear in the long run. Sometimes it is the overriding Will of Allah (ﷻ), in contradistinction to the will of man, to let *bāṭil* take its course until it reaches its cataclysmic end. For this to happen, these forces of vice and evil as they are represented by the concentration of secular power and wealth will have to stain themselves with crimes against humanity and the use of weapons of mass destruction. And after that tarnished but proven record they will be overtaken by the power of Allah (ﷻ) through the will of His men, or through climactic pandemonium and upheavals. At the same time the forces of *kufr* are setting themselves up for Allah’s (ﷻ) power penalty, the committed Muslims would be enduring physical reversals for the purpose of exposing internal enemies. The good guys have to be sorted out from the bad. The rewards entailed by this dual process are manifold,

**Do not [O Muhammad in the aftermath of Uḥud] be saddened by those who are going into *kufr* by leaps and bounds. They will never be able to harm Allah, not even by a scintilla. It turns out that Allah does not want them to acquire a share in the approaching life, where they will have a horrendous torment (3:176).**

The Prophet (ﷺ) indeed has a big heart. He is disturbed and sorrowful to see people racing into *kufr* as if there is something to be gained by penetrating into that *kufr*. And this is a fact of life.

There are people who think they can attain status by climbing the social ladder of *kufir*, as if there is a lasting profit or benefit from this *kufir* status. Of course, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) could see man's actions in the range of the *ākhirah*; to him these *kāfir* contenders were rushing into the worst possible circumstances in eternal life. And he could do nothing about it; even if he had tried they would in all likelihood not have listened to his admonitions. *Kufir* has a momentum and life of its own; when people are moving quickly through the fast lanes of God-denial in life they have no time to listen to the voice of truth, conscience, and genuineness. The Prophet (ﷺ) was doubly disturbed by the fact that these types were taking their toll on the committed Muslims, trying to disfigure the message of Allah (ﷻ), and repelling its popularity.

### Why Does *Kufir* Win?

There were many people in and around Makkah and Madinah, as well as throughout the Arabian Peninsula, who were anxious to know how the battle at Uḥud was to be concluded. They wanted to know who would be the winner, who would be the vanquished. People, as is the case almost everywhere, want to be with the victor. It was within this state of affairs that the following should be understood, **“Do not be grieved by those who hasten and accelerate into the establishment of *kufir*; they will never cause harm to Allah” (3:176)**. This is another way of saying that these *kāfirs* are not simply at war with human Muslims, they are at war with divine Islam and with Allah (ﷻ), but they will never be capable of doing Him harm. Everyone knows that Allah (ﷻ) is not physically manifested at the war front or in the battlefield. Rather He is embedded in the will of the God-committed Muslims who are obeying Him all the way to the blows of death, which they deliver and receive. In this dynamic it does not matter what immediate gains are made by *kufir* because the final outcome is determined by Allah (ﷻ) and not by *kāfir* generals, commanders, or chiefs.

But why does Allah (ﷻ) let these *kāfir* commandants and their forces endure and outlast military campaigns? Because Allah



(ﷻ) wants them to be excluded from a share of the *ākhirah* (the eventual world). Allah (ﷻ) wants them to give it all they have, to bear all the burden there is from fighting His subjects, to deserve all the punishment that is available, and then to reach the conclusive results of their God-denial at a time and place not of their liking; for they will have a tremendous affliction. But why should this happen? Because those who exchange divine commitment for God-denial as a type of commercial transaction attempt to hurt Allah’s (ﷻ) cause by fighting and persecuting His Prophets (ﷺ) and their committed followers; but it is impossible to hurt Allah (ﷻ), not even a bit, and it is they who shall suffer excruciatingly.

The international political system is rationalized by “participatory” representation in the UN; secured by the American military-industrial complex and NATO; financed by the IMF, the IFC, the World Bank and other centralized Western banks; and proselytized by information distribution centers from FM radio to satellite TV. This whole facade of *kufr* has stubbornly refused to admit — contrary to its liberal and progressive rhetoric — any current and enlightened presentation in practical terms of the Qur’an, the Prophet (ﷺ), and Islam. This international inter-locking system will revert to its essential belligerent military character if and when contemporary Muslims are able to establish their own independent, self-governing, operational state. This is not new. The established Makkan power went to war against Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) and the “fight to the finish” Muslims who accompanied him to Badr and Uḥud.

We do not need access to state secrets to know there is a well-thought-out strategy that works to preserve the God-denying establishments in the form of governments and nation-state authorities in these times of *jāhiliyah*. And the temporary “successes” of this strategy should not be considered an achievement or accomplishment. The deniers of Allah (ﷻ) should not regard the extension of their temporary worldly gains to be to their advantage; these temporary gains are designed to lead them into more contemptibility and estrangement from Allah (ﷻ), until finally they wind up receiving a humiliating anguish. This *āyah* is an answer to all those failing human thoughts about why the bad guys get away with it; it

is a reply to the inferior human psychology that admires *any* victor who assumes positions of triumph and success. The whole issue in its true dimensions does not fit into these premature “rush to judgment” impressions. In other words, Allah (ﷻ) is apprising struggling Muslims not to unconsciously cast this issue within these temperamental or supercharged notions, that is, notions such as “the *super-kāfirs* are winning and they have the upper hand!” These well-rounded *kāfirs* in our times are the elites who are pulling the secular and transnational strings of *kufr*, which is in open opposition to Allah’s (ﷻ) power in human affairs. These God-deniers should not figure that a God-given extension to their errant ways is in their interest. That extension is meant for them to accumulate more blunders and offenses.

These types of executive *kāfirs* are beyond reproach or criticism. Their inflated corporate egos have no time for “religious sermons,” “words of wisdom,” or scriptural direction. To them all of this is gibberish and nonsense. Their worldly life is a race to add on to the already existing layers of *kufr*. And it is so appropriate to slap them with Allah’s (ﷻ) factual words, “**...and for them there is a humiliating torment.**”

This whole ordeal in which it first appeared to the committed Muslims that the *kāfirs* have the upper-hand turned out to be a severe and trying experience. The twin fluctuations of victory and defeat in the killing fields, and the feelings of superiority and inferiority in the mental health of the Islamic forces flushed out undesirable parasites and blood-suckers from the ranks of the committed Muslims. These social leeches joined the Islamic infrastructure for the typical worldly, commercial, profit, and “upward social mobility” reasons. These were the ones who faked a public Islam, but harbored loyalties and allegiances inimical to the Prophet (ﷺ), the Qur’an, and the Islamic power base. None of them, though, was to be, in their words, “cannon fodder” for an Islamic armed force. These *munāfiqs* had not one iota of love and devotion for Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ).

An Islamic social order has to be cleansed of its jackals and foxes; the *munāfiqs* cannot go on pretending they are bona fide committed Muslims, and so

Allah would not allow the current status quo [pertaining to the committed Muslims] to continue; He eventually will distinguish the honorable from the dishonorable, and Allah will not have you access the *ghayb*. But it is Allah who gives an assignment to whomever of His Apostles He chooses; and if you commit yourselves and guard against Allah's power you will obtain a supreme reward (3:179).

Here, Allah (ﷻ) quite frankly says that it does not fit His plan to have the Islamic base of committed soldiers interspersed with *munāfiqs*, betrayers, dual-loyalists, and hypocrites. These types of people cannot be permitted to hide behind verbal expressions of affinity to Islam. Committed Muslims are out to change the world; they cannot have germs, microbes, bugs, and disease causing bacteria malignantly sapping their potential from within. The divinely selected core of loyal Muslims needs to throw dead weight off its social thrust, and to that end the *munāfiqs* would have to be identified and then flushed out.

The pressures bearing down on the Muslims at Uḥud made all of that possible. Uḥud, in a sense, was a cleanser — a cathartic cleanser — and the *munāfiqs* could no longer disguise themselves. Uḥud came as an answer to those who want “to take it easy,” and leave the struggle to another time and another generation. Some people expect a miraculous access to the unknown so they can obtain information that is in the realm of Allah (ﷻ) and not in the realm of man. Uḥud showed all these men that some types of information are only obtainable through a struggle, a confrontation, and a war. Uḥud generated important information pertaining to the depth of commitment, the degree of loyalty, and the willingness to fight as it relates to the Muslim enlistee, conscript, and recruit. No amount of background information or security checks are able to discern the mettle of soldiers like the real thing: the battlefield. Uḥud was a humanly unintended, but divinely intended, instrument of winnowing out the *munāfiqs* from the *mu'mins*.

**In this manner commit yourselves to Allah and His Apostle; and if you commit yourselves and raise your guards [vis-à-vis Allah's corrective power] you will retain exquisite rewards (3:179).**

A commitment of faith that is solidified in society is reinforced by appreciating Allah's (ﷻ) power at the front lines of warfare.

At times, we are told in this record of the truth (the Qur'an) that Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) was saddened by the fact that his own people were more involved with opposing Allah (ﷻ) than with accepting and loving Him. The Prophet's (ﷺ) response is part of his human nature. It would be part of anyone's human nature to be grieved by the fact that his family and folks remain antagonistic or irreconcilable with Allah (ﷻ). But there comes a time when this heartache and sorrow are counterproductive and may even, at times, blur the lines between the course to Allah (ﷻ) and the course away from Him. It is because of this loving and caring character, which ran the chance of emotionally intruding on the rational and higher responsibilities of Islamic activity, that Allah (ﷻ) said to His Prophet (ﷺ) and to all who share his delicate and tender human nature, "...hence, [O committed Muslim] do not waste yourself in grieving over them; verily, Allah has full knowledge of all they do!" (35:8). And in another corresponding *āyah*, He says, "But would you, perhaps, torment yourself to death with grief over them [opponents of Allah] if they are not willing to commit themselves to this [divine] dialogue?" (18:6).

Whichever way the opposition to Islam behaves it will work against them. The hard-core *kāfirs* and the soft-core *munāfiqs* can only harm themselves by antagonizing the committed Muslims. Some of their plans will boomerang on them in this world and some of their strategies will backfire on them on the Day of Fire. They simply will not be able to harm the committed Muslims in any significant way.

*Kāfir* hardliners think the more time they have, the more respite they enjoy; they think this is an indicator of how their *kāfir* ways are progressing. They do not take a moment to think, in the

course of social history, that Allah (ﷻ) gives the *kāfir* establishment time to reconsider its positions, to rethink its ways, to appraise critically its norms, and to change its mind about *kufr* altogether so that it can make amends with Allah (ﷻ), approach His Prophet (ﷺ), understand His words, and gain *īmān*. But as time has gone on, and as it has become too late for these types to turn back, they and their “modern” societies have been ruined, destroyed, or even obliterated in some instances.

This applies to all the antagonists of the committed Muslims at Uḥud. The Makkan army left the battlefield feeling it had scored some type of victory. They thought, “Well now, providence is on our side. You see! We defeated the Muslims who have a so-called prophet leading them.” This whole post-Uḥud *kāfir* psychology worked against these enemies of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). But they did not know it at the time. The rancor and gall coming from these Makkan *kāfirs* only served to set them up for the next military encounter with the combatant Muslims of Madinah. And in the next several engagements, they would suffer not only a material military defeat but also a psychological fall from the “false-high” of Uḥud. Adding insult to injury, they had to come to terms with the shattering fact that the committed Muslims would never retreat in any sense of the word from their divinely defined duties.

### **Uḥud: Learning the *Sunan* in the Heat of Action**

The combat at Uḥud was a lesson never to be forgotten. Alas, today’s Muslims have inherited a drift that has lasted for generations. For all practical purposes in the past century, there has not been an Islamic leadership that has assumed the responsibilities and devised the strategy for warfare against invading and occupying *kāfir* forces. And for centuries before that, the Islamic leadership was tarnished with depravity and forms of totalitarianism. Therefore, this lesson has to be put into focus.

In the first instance, the understanding of “religion,” God, and Islam by the status quo individual and the average civilian member of society is that if he “religiously” adheres to his faith — meaning

that he gives a sincere performance to his religion's customary observances such as praying, chipping into the *ṣadaqah* box, fasting, and performing the Hajj — then he can expect God to be on his side and at his service. And when the circumstances require these individuals to become soldiers, who carry these prescribed procedures for conducting religious ceremonies to the battle arena, they instinctively and automatically assume that God is on their side and they are going to win the fight. All of these premises and assumptions were at work in the course of the clash at Uḥud. And then as if the Muslims were struck by a thunderbolt in the “defeat” they sustained, they looked at themselves and said, in effect, how could something like this happen? If we are so obviously on Allah's (ﷻ) side and our enemy is so obviously against Allah (ﷻ), how could we come out of Uḥud militarily disappointed and unsuccessful?

This question was not put to rest there and then, even though the *āyāt* here make it clear and explain the whole issue. People, particularly Muslims, have to understand that their relationship with Allah (ﷻ) works within their human potential and abilities insofar as the exercise of this potential is part of the larger material, social, and environmental human condition. The internal Islamic potential is in a flux with the external human condition. The two are destined to impact each other within the range of each one's “velocity;” or in other words, change takes place when the number of people committed to Allah (ﷻ) along with the quality of their commitment interact with their counterparts, the number of people opposed to Allah (ﷻ) and the tone of their God-denial (*kufr*). When there is a clash between these two social dynamics and the results seem to favor the God-deniers, many people are turned off, lose interest, or even abandon “religion” altogether. Their presumptions have been jolted by reality and they become frustrated, discouraged, and bedeviled because their private attachment to Allah (ﷻ) did not score a social or a military victory. Some of these types may even go to the extent of becoming agnostics, atheists, or religious outcasts.<sup>356</sup>

Succinctly stated, this *dīn* of Islam is an itinerary of integrated social norms, methods, and behaviors endorsed by Allah (ﷻ), the Most Wise. As an expression of love for His finest creation, He has

presented it to us so that we may capably discharge the responsibility of rule *within* the capacity and potentiality we have as humans. Allah (ﷻ) does not compel us to do things that are humanly impossible; we are not expected to be “supermen.” People, therefore, are enjoined to begin to work Allah’s (ﷻ) will — disclosed to them by the Book and the Prophet (ﷺ) — from the location and level of the particulars they are in. And from there, they continue an upward mobility and progressive line of action on a straightforward course to Allah (ﷻ). These God-adhering Muslims are required to comply with Allah (ﷻ) in proportion to their own ability to produce.

What distinguishes this *dīn* of Islam is that along the earthly way to Allah (ﷻ), never at any step or at any time is man asked to do things that are supernatural, unbearable, or impossible. Human nature is always the central factor in Islamic responsibilities and duties. This Islamic lively program, which has always honored and ennobled human nature, has enabled Muslims to reach a climax unlike any other modernity or civilization known to man in the course of human history.

Man’s binding with this *dīn* has always been forestalled by the notion that a personal affinity with God will do miracles. These miracles, that sound impassioned, look wild, and feel out-of-the-ordinary, have nothing to do with human nature, are not related to man’s potential, and are not generated by man’s struggle and effort.<sup>357</sup> Some sideline Muslims also throw in their superficial observation by saying, “Well isn’t this *dīn* from Allah (ﷻ)? And isn’t Allah (ﷻ) the Almighty, the Powerful, and the Omnipotent? So why should this *dīn* be held “hostage” to human frailty and vulnerabilities? Why isn’t Islam always victorious? Why aren’t the Muslims — the adherents of Islam — always triumphant? Why does it seem that Islam, in some instances, is susceptible to man’s irregular attitude, his lusts, and the pressures of materialistic life? And then why are faithless opponents of Allah (ﷻ) at times successful in thwarting or hindering the Muslims?

All of these questions are generated by a mindset detached from the essence of this *dīn*, or from a mental attitude expecting

Allah (ﷻ) to behave in a way that serves its convenient interests. These questions may also come from simpleminded and unsophisticated people who never had the opportunity to experience the way this *din* takes its course in the social and global environment of man.

Of course Allah (ﷻ) is capable of changing this human nature in a way that would make it more tolerant to the demands of this *din*. Allah (ﷻ) could have made that possible in creational, innovative, or developmental ways. Allah (ﷻ) also could have created us from the beginning with an affinity to endure hardships and difficulties that are to be encountered on our course to Him without complaining, questioning, and even abandoning Him. The fact of the matter is that Allah (ﷻ) created us with the human nature we have, we are familiar with, and we are destined to maintain until the end of time. This human nature is characterized, among other things, with its initiative and response disciplines. In the course of human life, Allah (ﷻ) willed that His scriptural program to man be implemented through man's endeavors, efforts, and exertion, which all interact with continual scriptural reciprocity and response. But man's enterprise is never to be extended beyond the endowments, aptitudes, and readiness of his human nature. In all of this, human nature remains human nature; it is not altered, fragmented, or obliterated. Within this frame of reference man is capable of achieving in proportion to his effort, constrained as it is by the peculiar circumstances of his particular time and place.

If we respect our subordinate position as humans while honoring Allah's (ﷻ) superior position as deity, we should not be asking silly questions such as, "Why did Allah (ﷻ) will such a human nature or its proportional human qualities?" We should look upon ourselves as humans who are able to ask questions that pertain to creation and the deity but are not able to understand answers that pertain to creation and Allah (ﷻ). We are not capable of assimilating all of the available information, most of it thus far beyond the reach of collective human capacities, to figure out the infinite reality prevalent in creation and the nature of life, or even the distances involved in an unending cosmos. We are left with a tracing mind that is able to reflect and reconsider the dynamics and mechanics of



the world, existence, and life. And in doing so, we are able to appreciate the accumulated knowledge, erudition, and enlightenment that enables us to grasp the compatibility of the proportionality of human nature and the universe to life as we know it.

Human beings have long been aware that they occupy a peculiar place in the world.<sup>358</sup> Modern observations, apart from the secular evolutionary spin, tend to reinforce concepts of human transcendence, and continual crossing of new experiential horizons. The main distinction between the Qur'anic emphasis on human transcendence through scripturally supervised trial and error (affirming the trial and correcting the error) and the Judeo-Christian understanding of human transcendence by a simultaneous over-emphasis and over-simplification of miracles in their scriptural history, is that Allah's (ﷻ) *dīn* is not theory without practice, and it also is not miracles without human action, experiment, and hard work. After centuries of human interactions and reactions with God, prophets, and scripture, the reemergence of the Judeo-Christian understanding as a foundation for Western secular postulations, coupled with the decline of the Qur'anic civilization in the past several hundred years, has resulted in a mental incapacity to institutionalize and establish this fact once and for all.

This human accordance and participation with the revealed meanings is Allah's (ﷻ) involvement in human affairs. The morality or immorality of individuals, the legitimacy or illegitimacy of governments, and all the human pursuits in between are a function of this affiliation by struggle to Allah (ﷻ) or dissociation by a crusade against Him. Communities and civilizations rise and fall not because of some tangential miracles but because of the human work and labor that conform to or contradict the physical and social laws ingrained by Allah (ﷻ) into life and existence.

Let us make it clear beyond any residual doubt that just because Islam comes from Allah (ﷻ) via Muhammad (ﷺ) it is not habitually and automatically going to rise above all other forms of life management in human society. That is not the case. Islam is not going to take its practical and earth-bound course simply because it has been communicated and explained to people. Islam is not going

to be automated by Allah (ﷻ) so that it resembles a mechanical process governed by physical laws as is the case with falling objects and the motion of galaxies. Islam is going to work the way it is supposed to and ought to work: when an assembly of people — working with and not against their human nature — are united through their commitment and allegiance to Allah (ﷻ) for the purpose of actualizing its social values, fulfilling its social principles, and enacting its social laws in the expanse of human society from one continent to the other. Wandering human beings and drifting human societies need this lifeline from Allah (ﷻ) — they need it more in practice than in theory. It will take a working Islamic model on earth to convince the skeptics and the pessimists that Islam is the way to go. And it will work not by anticipating miracles and waiting for saviors and expected deliverers; it will work by a spirit of trial and error that stands to be corrected by Allah's (ﷻ) infallible words and His Prophet's praiseworthy precedent. And when this course of action is in motion there may surface miracles and there may come *mahdīs* and messiahs, by Allah's (ﷻ) leave.

The confrontation at Uḥud taught the early Muslims that it is not enough to go to the front lines of military conflict equipped only with rituals and *tahārah* of your private parts while simultaneously expecting victory to be sent, posted, and parceled from heaven. When many of these Muslims around Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) went to Uḥud with that attitude, Allah (ﷻ) gave them a commensurate setback. They did not prepare for a battle in accordance with Allah's (ﷻ) social laws (*sunan*); therefore, they got what they deserved: futility compounded with the feelings accompanying an experience of being thwarted.

**Do you ask when you are compounded with a problem [of military reversal at Uḥud] when [at Badr you had been militarily] successful, “How could this be?” Say [O Muhammad to them], “It is because of you [due to your own assumptions and ritualistic reliance on Allah].” Certainly, Allah overpowers everything (3:165).**

### From the Bottom to the Top in Just One Generation

This generation of Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ) at Badr, Uḥud, and at other military confrontations with *kufr* is considered to be the model generation that made it possible for Islam to establish and institutionalize the practical meanings of this inspirational Scripture. Eventually, this generation was designated as the best Ummah, “**You are made to be the best Ummah as you [take Islam] into its interactive reality with other people...**” (3:110). But despite that, how does Allah (ﷻ) evaluate these “cream of the crop” Muslims? Were they always angelic, idealistic, and optimal? The reality of human nature as it works its way out of its worldly inclinations and unto Allah (ﷻ) is quite different than our first impression. These struggling and committed Muslims around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) were at times marred by human weakness and deficiencies. Some of them were described by Allah (ﷻ) in these words,

**Indeed, those of you [at Uḥud] who had retreated when the two legions met at the war front, were co-opted by Satan due to some of their gains, and indeed Allah has forgiven them (3:155).**

Allah (ﷻ) said about another contingent of these committed trial-and-error Muslims,

**And the moment came when you showed a failure of nerve and began to argue among yourselves, you became disobedient after seeing the favorable turn of the tide in battle; some of you desire this world and some of you desire the final world. Then He distracted them from you (3:152).**

And still Allah (ﷻ) depicts yet another category within this assembly of the faithful around Muhammad (ﷺ) by saying,

**Two camps from among you [the committed Muslims] were about to be thwarted, even though Allah is their**

**Superior, and in Allah should the committed Muslims place their trust (3:122).**

Some of these trial-and-error Muslims who had made it all the way to the front lines at Uḥud were showing signs of betrayal and defiance of the Prophet's authority. Their inner defeat was presented in these words from Allah (ﷻ),

**There you are rushing away, paying no attention to anyone, and the Prophet is calling for you from a rearward military position. So Allah dealt you misery upon misery so that you may not [merely] grieve for what you have forfeited nor for what has inflicted you (3:153).**

All of these were what some people would characterize as "hard-core" Muslims. But they were not perfect and they were not complete. They were on their way to improving their qualities and enhancing their lives. Uḥud and the battles of Islam were one way they helped themselves. But they would not have been able to step up to the plate of Uḥud if they were not serious about their loyalty to Allah (ﷻ) and obedience to His Prophet (ﷺ). Their benevolence was much more than their malevolence; and it was probably for that reason that Allah (ﷻ) tolerated their mistakes due to inadequacy and amnestied their erratic noncompliance. The Prophet (ﷺ) was also instructed by Allah (ﷻ) to pardon them, to ask Allah (ﷻ) to grant forgiveness to them, and to involve them in the decision-making process.

Had these characters been hateful or baneful to the core then Allah (ﷻ) would not have made Islamic history out of them. He would have chosen Muhammad (ﷺ) to be a prophet in some other society. Or He could have had them expelled from the society in Madinah for all their petty differences, their insufficiencies, and their helplessness. But it turns out that Allah (ﷻ) accepted their defects and their imperfections. He educated them not in academies teaching social sciences, but in on-the-job-training, thereby disclosing to them His *sunan* (social laws) in the

heat of action and movement. It is hard to learn when you are injured, in pain, and bleeding, but coincidentally it is not easy to forget the lessons learned.

This, then, is the method that was used at Uḥud and at other military expeditions to build that first generation of exemplary combat-ready Muslims. After they fought bravely at the war front, even though they were not the bulk of the troops, it served as a lesson for everyone else to look back and evaluate why human nature in some individuals was steadfast while in others it showed signs of timidity, hypocrisy, or insubordination. This whole military exercise was not designed to blame, defame, or maim the character of any serviceman who meant good but was unable, for reasons attributable more to defects in character than venomous intent, to stay the course. This war history of those glorious first generations of Muslims was not meant to overload human nature with military duties that were way beyond its capabilities. That outstanding “group in the making” around the Prophet (ﷺ) set a precedent that we, in later times, are required to follow.

In Madinah, there was an Islamic society growing in small strides. It was this maturing Islamic society that would, later on, be held responsible for the absconding attitude of three men who refused to go to war. During the run-up to Uḥud, recall that there were more than 300 men who refused to go to war and no “legal” action was taken against them. True, before Uḥud, the Muslims were psychologically exposed and socially estranged. But because of the circumstances — the relatively recent transition of Yathrib to Madinah, the overwhelming hostilities coming from all directions, and the untested assimilation of the Muhājirūn with the Anṣār — taking corrective action against such a large number of defectors would have hindered the careful construction of the Islamic quality of that society.

However, during the preparations for Ghazwaḥ Tabūk at the end of the ninth *hijrī* year there were three men who refused to go to war. In response, there were certain policies enacted against them in a moral and legal manner, corresponding to the maturity of the Islamic society and the Islamic State in Madinah. The details of this

major and final battle attended by Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) will be considered in more detail in *Sūrah al-Barā'ah (al-Tawbah)*. Truth be said, the Islamic social order had come a long way from the way it looked at the time of Uḥud to the way it had become at the time of Tabūk. It took time, effort, perseverance, and consistency to raise them from the level of Uḥud to the level of Tabūk. Throughout this transition, the same crowd, the same folks, and the same people were the protagonists. But they were led by a solid, orderly, uniform, patient, and compassionate Prophet (ﷺ) who was capable of convincing and transforming through practical experience and “hands-on” education an undisciplined and feuding mob into a responsible, committed, and motivated society. And between the two ends of this changeover these people were human: some of them remained weak, some were lacking and wanting, while others were error-prone. But along with these flaws and faults they remained keen on Allah's (ﷻ) amnesty, forgiveness, and remission.

Islam works in a way that takes into consideration our potentials and abilities within the limits of human nature. We are not expected to do the impossible but we are not left to have someone else do for us what we are required to do in the realm of the possible.

There you have it! It took real-life events, an investment of time and effort, and then some sacrifices and selflessness, but in the end these primitive nomads on the Arabian sands made it. They were able to work themselves up from virtually nothing to become the unique force in history that swept through the four corners of the earth by virtue of its own efforts, guided as it was by the light from Allah (ﷻ) and His promise. These students and disciples of Muhammad (ﷺ) did not sit back and wait for a miracle to happen; they did not expect God to come down to earth to do the job for them, and they did not go to Allah's (ﷻ) enemies to lobby for their cause. They began with tireless efforts from the bottom of the human pit (the desolate and forsaken sands of Arabia) and made it to the summit (the surrounding regions of modernity and civilization) of their time. This was all achieved due to one condition — one important condition: they had unshakable confidence and utter reliance in Allah (ﷻ), His word, His Prophet (ﷺ), and their Islamic leaders.

### ***Shūrā* Makes Decision-Makers and Voters Accountable**

Of all the lessons we may extract from these avant-garde events, the most striking one in the opinion of this writer is the fact that Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) could have saved the committed Muslims then, and the committed Muslims now, the agonizing details of this “less than successful” military campaign at Uḥud; but he did not. He could have easily dismissed the majority opinion coming out of the *shūrā*; and the lesson would have gone in another direction. The Muslims would have fought inside of Madinah, and in all likelihood they would have won the battle (it probably would have been called the Battle of Madinah instead of Uḥud). And in that case everyone would have known that the Prophet’s (ﷺ) opinion was superior to the opinion of the majority of Muslims, who had decided via a *shūrā* to leave Madinah and fight the *mushriks* elsewhere. But, conversely, who would have been able to say, had Uḥud been fought according to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) command, that the Muslims would have lost at Uḥud. No one, in hindsight, would have been able to *prove* that the outcome of fighting at Uḥud (the majority Muslim opinion) would have been different than that of fighting inside Madinah (the Prophet’s (ﷺ) and the minority Muslim opinion). The lesson here was to prove to future generations that even though a “minority opinion” may be more well-founded than a “majority opinion” it is the majority opinion that is binding, especially when all the voters are participants in the activity being decided upon — in this case, dueling with the enemy. And the choice based on this *shūrā* did not turn out to be the worst of options, as it, in and of itself, was not the sole determinant of the course of battle at Uḥud. It was the disobedience of the marksmen, who left their prophetically appointed positions, that effectively turned the tide of the battle in favor of the *mushriks* and to the detriment of the committed Muslims.

At the last moment when he left his home with his military gear, the Prophet (ﷺ) had an opportunity, at the entreaties of the majority who voted against him, to change his mind and remain inside Madinah; but he refused to do that. He, in fact and in practice, wanted to teach the obedient Muslims that their majority

opinion is binding on them all — himself included. This is another perceptive way of making everyone feel like they all are in this together. They should understand they are responsible for their opinions and they shall bear the consequences of their judgments. This, in the final analysis, is more important than to dodge some losses here and there. The solidarity and the team spirit of the fighting Muslims, in retrospect, outweighs all the personal casualties and reversals they suffered at Uḥud. Opting out of this *shūrā* would have meant denying the growing social order in Madinah the opportunity of gaining the experiences at Uḥud, the knowledge that evolved through the course of the battle, and the educational value of this military affair.

There is a qualitative difference between the *tarbiyah* approach of many Islamic organizations today and the *tarbiyah* approach taken by Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) during those illustrious times. In our "not ready for prime time" Islamic *tarbiyah* nowadays we want to teach Muslims plenty of theory. We desire to have Muslims spend most of their lives in schools and academic settings, trying to theorize on what social idea is best, suitable, feasible, and applicable. We are satisfied with a strictly speculative or abstract explanation of social imperatives. Worse yet, in many "Islamic" institutions, we constrain our students to strictly memorize the Qur'an, the Hadith, the opinions of bygone scholars, and the history according to a certain *madhhab* for years and years before they are permitted to even think on their own. By the time, these students reach the rank of scholars, their most vigorous years are behind them. When was the last time we heard of some Islamic studies professor employing Abū Ḥanīfah's teaching method to stimulate rational thinking and illuminate ideas? Are we surprised then to learn that Islamic studies graduates are ill-equipped to problem solve in their real world? And are we equally surprised when an Islamic studies degree from Harvard or Oxford carries more weight than one from al-Azhar or the University of Madinah?

Compounding this approach is the fact that we do not even admit the intellectual cream of Islamic societies to our Islamic institutions. Leaving aside the vile Yahūdī propaganda against



Islamic education, in most Muslim countries today, those who are not successful in the secular science, technology, or professional schools are perfunctorily admitted to the poorly funded Islamic universities. Those who could not succeed in engineering, medicine, or computer science are forced to graduate with a degree from Islamic schools. Furthermore, the faculty and staff in these universities are inadequately compensated, thus attracting either the extremely dedicated or, in most cases, those who are simply “doing a job.” To top it all off, these “Islamic” institutions are now busy removing all references to jihad, *qitāl*, *kufr*, *shirk*, and Yahūd from the already mind-numbing Islamic curricula at the instigation of worldwide imperialism and Zionism, thereby completing the vicious cycle of Islamic educational failure.

We can without difficulty see that Muhammad (ﷺ) did not engage in this type of *tarbiyah*. He was not waiting around in Madinah to cultivate, educate, and theoretically develop an Islamic society. He had principles and basic truths that had to be sparked and actuated. He knew these principles will never be thoroughly understood unless and until they are practiced, put to the test, and carried out. *Shūrā* was one such principle. Denying a society from the general implementation of *shūrā* is worse than the bitter consequences of its first implementation. And if there were some initial mistakes in applying *shūrā* these mistakes cannot justify suspending or canceling this *shūrā*. It was understood by the Prophet (ﷺ) at that time and within those nascent circumstances in Madinah that *shūrā* postponed is *shūrā* denied. It was the unlettered people of Madinah who present us with this scholarly lesson. And unto the Prophet (ﷺ) go these courteous words, **“Pardon them, and ask forgiveness for them, and confer with them on public matters [or matters of the public interest]” (3:159).**

The principle of *shūrā* was so formidable that Muhammad (ﷺ) did not want the Muslims to vote again on what to do regarding whether to go to Uḥud or to stay in Madinah. That was out of the question. He did not want to water down or devalue the importance of reaching a decision. Suppose he would have reconsidered and acquiesced to the Muslim public, voting again on what should be

done, would that not have meant that he wants them to vote his conscience and not theirs (as they now knew his personal opinion about this war strategy). Had he done this, could it not have meant he was suggesting that their initial opinion does not carry much weight and that they would have to vote again to prove what they really want to do? And would this not mean that he has less confidence in them than they have in their own selves? Whichever way you look at it the Prophet's decision was a principled one because *shūrā* is a principle, a standard, and a rule. And when you make up your mind you place your confidence in Allah (ﷻ).

In closing out this lesson, what should be kept in mind and grounded in the hearts is the intimate relationship between a set of principles and a set of variables: the former is the standard of Islam and the latter is the human effort to adapt to that Islamic standard. The standard of Islam has always been and will always be impeccable and flawless, while the human effort to accommodate the Islamic standard will remain — to various degrees — flawed and imperfect. At the clash of Uḥud the Qur'anic and prophetic standards are eloquently stated, clearly communicated, and eminently approachable for human beings. The human adjustment to that, though, disclosed all the details and specifics that formed the subject of this lesson.

The same fault line continued throughout subsequent generations: some of them were very capable and qualified to espouse the Islamic standard and principle, while others were less capable and less qualified. This is true for kings and absolute rulers in Islamic history who voided a public *shūrā* and it is comparably true for certain 20th-century Islamic organizations that have also managed to restrict or curb this *shūrā*. We should never lose touch with this Qur'an and go to extremes by saying that just because *shūrā* is absent from time to time and from country to country in the public decision making process, it becomes impossible for us to reconstruct and resume the proper practice of a central *shūrā* in our body politic. The intermittent failure of ruling elites to observe this essential standard should make us redouble our efforts to show ourselves and everyone else that what was once accomplished success-

fully can be done again and again with equal success. Rulers, whoever they may have been in our Islamic history, are humans; they err and they stand to be corrected in retrospect or currently. We should judge these rulers by the standards of Islam and not judge Islam by their behaviors.

## Uḥūd and the Unremitting Yahūdī Opposition to Islam

- (3:180) And they should not think — they who niggardly cling to all that Allah has granted them out of His bounty — that this is good for them; no, it is bad for them. That to which they [so] niggardly cling will, on the Day of Resurrection, be hung about their necks. For unto Allah [alone] belongs the heritage of the heavens and of the earth; and Allah is aware of all that you do.
- (3:181) Allah has indeed heard the saying of those who said, “Behold, Allah is poor while we are rich!” We shall record what they have said, as well as their slaying of prophets against all right, and We shall say [to them on Judgement Day], “Taste suffering through fire,”
- (3:182) In return for what your own hands have wrought; for never does Allah do the least wrong to His creatures!
- (3:183) As for those who maintain, “Behold, Allah has bidden us not to believe in any apostle unless he comes to us with burnt offerings.” Say [to them, O Prophet], “Even before me there came unto you apostles with all evidence of the truth, and with that whereof you speak; why, then, did you kill them, if what you say is true?”
- (3:184) And if they give you the lie — even so, before your time, have [other] apostles been given the lie when they came with all evidence of the truth, and with books of divine wisdom, and with light-giving revelation.
- (3:185) Every human being is bound to taste death. But only on the Day of Resurrection will you be requited in full

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ  
 بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخَلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ  
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٨٠﴾ لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ  
 الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ  
 الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٨١﴾ ذَلِكَ  
 بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ الَّذِينَ  
 قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عٰهَدَ إِلَيْنَا آلا نُؤْمِنُ لِرَسُولٍ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِنَنَا بِقُرْبَانٍ  
 تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قَبْلِ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالَّذِي  
 قُتِلْتُمْ فَلِمَ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ  
 كَذَّبَ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿١٨٤﴾  
 كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ  
 فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ  
 الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْفُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾ \* لَتَسْلُوبُنَّ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ  
 وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ  
 قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصَبَرُوا

وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨٦﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ  
 الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ، فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ  
 ظُهُورِهِمْ وَأَشْرَوْا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَبُئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ لَا  
 تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أُوتُوا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا  
 فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾ وَلِلَّهِ  
 مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨٩﴾

[for whatever you have done] — whereupon he that shall be drawn away from the Fire and brought into Paradise will indeed have gained a triumph; for the life of this world is nothing but an enjoyment of self-delusion.

- (3:186) You shall most certainly be tried in your possessions and in your persons; and indeed you shall hear many hurtful things from those to whom revelation was granted before your time, as well as from those who have come to ascribe divinity to other beings beside Allah. But if you remain patient in adversity and conscious of Him — this, behold, is something to set one's heart upon.
- (3:187) And lo, Allah accepted a solemn pledge from those who were granted earlier revelation [when He bade them], "Make it known to mankind, and do not conceal it!" But they cast this [pledge] behind their backs, and bartered it away for a trifling gain; and how evil was their bargain!
- (3:188) Think not that those who exult in what they have thus contrived, and who live to be praised for what they have

- not done — think not that they will escape suffering; for grievous suffering does await them [in the life to come].
- (3:189) And to Allah belongs the dominion over the heavens and the earth; and Allah has the power to will anything (Āl ‘Imrān:180–189).

The military clash at Uḥud was over but there is another clash that seems to go on and on and on: the clash the supporters and admirers of Allah (ﷻ) will always have with the enemies of Allah (ﷻ). These types of people were in and around Madinah, and among them if not the core of them were the Yahūd. These types of antagonists wanted to erode confidence in Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), they sought to sow seeds of doubt in the public mind, and they tried to instigate dissension among the newly committed Muslims. They would look at every social development with a view to verbally assault the Qur’an, the Prophet (ﷺ), and Islam. And at this point, there can be nothing but sympathy and great reverence for the patience and fortitude of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), for now he and the committed Muslims would return from the clamor of swords to be greeted by the cacophony of quarrels.

To really appreciate the meanings of these words-of-advice *āyāt*, the social facts need to be reconstructed and the social fabric woven together. Before Uḥud and after Badr, Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) had already vacated Madinah of the Jewish faction known as Banū Qaynuqā’ because of its civil spite and stratagem vis-à-vis the new Islamic order, not to mention its skirmishes and grumbling that seethed with ill will toward the Islamic State in Madinah. They even went as far as annulling their agreement with the Prophet (ﷺ), which was enacted upon his arrival in Madinah when he (ﷺ) founded the seminal Islamic social order with the allegiance, cooperation, and integration of the Aws and Khazraj.<sup>359</sup> Even though Banū Qaynuqā’ was ejected from Madinah before the Muslims’ military reversal at Uḥud, there still was a miscellanea of Jews in and around Madinah: Banū al-Naḍīr, Banū Qurayẓah, and other settlements of Jews at Khaybar and in the Northern and Southern Arabian Peninsula. It would be naive for Muslims to think that

these colonies of Jews were not communicating and sharing information with each other to destabilize or even dismantle the pace-setting Madinan Islamic State. It would also be childlike and simpleminded to think that there were no focus groups, communications, links, and liaisons between the Yahūd and the *munāfiqs*, both of whom could never reconcile themselves to an Islamic authority spreading throughout the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. Add to this nexus of Yahūd and the *munāfiqs* the *mushriks*, who were, at that time, the bulk of the people in Makkah and Arabia. With all these political parties, elitist contingents, and materialistic status quo beliefs, the hostility and aggressive policies toward the nascent Islamic State in Madinah were intense, interlocking, and potentially lethal.

At the outset of *Sūrah* Āl 'Imrān there was a word of caution to Yahūd not to place themselves in the position of the *mushriks* who had been devastated at Badr,

Say to those who deny Allah [His power presence on earth], “You will be defeated and assembled in Hell and how awful a resting-place.” You had advance notice pertaining to Allah’s earthly power presence as the two camps came face to face [in war]. One camp is fighting for the cause of Allah and the other is in denial of Him; they see them twice their numbers with their own eyes. And Allah gives victory to whom He wills; in that there is an object lesson for those with foresight” (3:12–13).

When Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) conveyed this scriptural warning to them — a warning that corresponded to the magnitude of their bitter anger and deep-seated ill will as well as their insolence and cynicism after the Islamic victory at Badr — these Yahūd were rude to him. They said, “O Muhammad! Don’t have an exaggerated sense of self-importance just because you managed to kill off a contingent of Quraysh who were amateur warriors and mellow at that. For, by God, if you were to fight against us you would come to realize that

we are the people to be reckoned with! You will never know who we are until you have first hand knowledge of us...!”<sup>360</sup> These Yahūd continued to behave in such a condescending manner, showing all signs of disagreement, divergence, and dissension with Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), the new Islamic authority, and the in-vogue Islamic State in Madinah.

This irreconcilable Yahūdī socio-political attitude would eventually lead Banū Qaynuqā‘ into annulling the understanding they had inked with Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) upon his arrival in Madinah. And so it naturally came to pass that Muhammad (ﷺ) expelled them from Madinah when they were forced to accede to his ruling on their duplicitous social and political behavior. They were ousted to a place called Adhru‘āt in geographical Syria. But, still, there were two other Jewish factions in Madinah that were capable of causing anguish and destabilization: Banū al-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayzah. These remaining two Yahūdī menaces of Madinah were up to their usual trouble-making subterfuge: spreading misinformation, skewing the facts, instigating potential rivals, stirring up old feuds, and trying to build a coalition of forces in Arabia that would “stamp out” Islam and end its socio-political reality. The Yahūd had a historical legacy and centuries of experience to their diachronic heritage of undoing everything the Prophets (ﷺ) were struggling to achieve. This Qur’an is an accurate record and true testament of Yahūdī chicanery and mendacity for which they have been roundly condemned like no other people.

As one follows and learns from the groundbreaking events in Arabia hundreds of years ago he grows increasingly familiar with Yahūdī shenanigans and mischief-making. The more one reads and understands, the more these Yahūd appear to be discourteous with Allah (ﷻ) and irreconcilably averse to Muslims. As citizens of an Islamic state in Madinah they were reluctant to pay their share of money to the Islamic State and Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), despite the fact that they had agreed in principle to do so and that they were receiving security services from the Islamic State. And, as if they could declare themselves immune from Allah’s (ﷻ) retribution, they would mock Him and His final Messenger (ﷺ),



going completely overboard, “Verily, God is poor and we are rich!” (3:181).

These Yahūd would contrive any excuse to avoid the validity, the truth, and the virtue of Islam. They were willing to ignore their whole history, which was being ratified by the Prophet (ﷺ) as the Qur’an, in all its non-racist intents and purposes, was being revealed. They were willing to conceal the truth in their possession, which they knew very well, from those who had not yet received Allah’s (ﷻ) guidance; they would even be willing to sell God’s instructions if they could make money out of it.<sup>361</sup>

They did murder prophets or were instrumental in having prophets murdered, even though these prophets (ﷺ) were trying to bind them to the divine reality, showing them miracles as glaring evidence to “win them over.” But not the Yahūd... they had their own agenda, their own mindset, and their own dreams.

The Yahūdī misbehavior and misdeeds with the Prophet (ﷺ) and committed Muslims singled them out in the public eye. Having an ugly past and depraved psychology with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophets (ﷺ), they could no longer go unnoticed as they were now activating their historical and racist instincts to defeat Muhammad (ﷺ) and the new Islamic State in Madinah. The *mushriks* and the Yahūd of Arabia were as formidable a force then as they are today. The combination of their think tanks and battle preparedness cannot be dismissed as freak social and political happenstances. The active and struggling Muslims in such challenges need accurate information about these types of people. Muslims cannot afford to make believe that the Yahūd and *mushriks* will ever accommodate an Islamic authority, leadership, state, and government. It never happened in the past, nor shall it in the future. The nature of this *Yahūdī-mushrik-munāfiq* cabal has to sink into the core beliefs of Muslims and settle into the grain of their thoughts. This is what Allah (ﷻ) is teaching us in this thoughtful and penetrating Qur’an.

The nature of Yahūd’s day-and-night enmity to the Muslims in Madinah may have been more severe and dangerous than the *mushriks’* persecution in Makkah. The Yahūdī threat to Islamic self-

determination is probably — in our day and time — still the most deadly threat we face in our efforts to rebuild our social reality, consolidate our political will, and resume our Islamic lifestyle. It is up to the resolute Muslims now to foil all the political plots hatched by Yahūd and their accessories, peers, and sidekicks.

There is no reason to believe that Islam has changed — it is still as refreshing as it was 1,400 years ago when it was compiled into this Book. And there is no reason to believe that the Yahūdī agenda has changed — they are still as hostile and unfriendly as they have established themselves to be throughout the time of their existence on earth. The inevitability of conflict has been set in time and cast in scripture. Any Islamic party or movement that understands these words from Allah (ﷻ) will immediately recognize its enemies and execute its responsibilities vis-à-vis these haters of *ḥaqq*. There is a tripartite formation of ostensibly opposing military forces and hostile individuals defined by Zionism, imperialism, and *nifāqism*. Zionists hide behind the Torah, imperialists conceal themselves behind the Gospel, and the *munāfiqs* obscure themselves behind the Qur'an. If people were identified by their actions rather than their rituals, then a Zionist, an imperialist, and a *munāfiq* would not be misconstrued for an elaborate religious affiliation that seems to cancel their true and practical identity. As these two-face types frequent synagogues, churches, and *masjids*, they conveniently pretend to be the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims they are not.

There is a daunting task ahead for all people who are observant of Allah (ﷻ) in their behavior, labor, and actions. They have to tear down this bogus “religiosity,” fronting for all strategies, policies, and acts that are hostile to Allah (ﷻ). There will be times of trial and sacrifice galore, but there is nothing to lose. A Muslim, who lives the word and will of Allah (ﷻ) as enunciated in this Book of record, will never feel at a loss whatever the obstacles, wherever the challenges, whoever the enemy, and whenever the call of duty.

**Every living person shall experience death; but you will be given the full measure of your rewards on the**

Day of Resurrection. For he who is edged away from the Fire and entered into Paradise, it is he who has succeeded; and this worldly life is nothing but a meriment of self-delusion. You will be put to test due to the wealth and lives that are in your acquisition, and you will most certainly listen to those who have received scripture before you, and to the *mushriks*, to a degree that will immensely hurt you; but if you are patient and persevere and if you avoid Allah’s power response [to your potential deviation] you will have done the most demanding task (3:185–186).

### The Genetic Yahūdī Rejection of Allah (ﷻ)

To have a better understanding of these *āyāt* we would have to go back to the real life events that called for these *āyāt* to be revealed. The following *āyah*,

Those who are stingy with what Allah has given them should not consider their act [of stinginess] to be in their favor, rather it is to their detriment; they will be hemmed in by their parsimonious conduct, and to Allah belongs the inheritance of heavens and earth, and Allah is well acquainted with what you do (3:180).

was revealed, according to most scholarly Qur’anic opinions, in reference to people who withhold and refuse to pay their share of *zakāh*. There is another less popular explanation but one that is more relevant to the overall focus of these *āyāt*; this interpretation says that it was revealed in response to the demeanor of Yahūdī gurus who were withholding and keeping back information about Muhammad (ﷺ) and the authenticity of his prophethood. They were not stingy with money, according to this view, but with the knowledge in their possession.<sup>362</sup>

Then the next *āyah*,

Allah has indeed heard the utterance of those who said that Allah is certainly poor and we are rich; We will record what they said and [We shall record] their murder of prophets without justification, and We will say, “Savor the torment of burning!” (3:181).

came to publicize the unpleasant and offensive trait found particularly among the Yahūd. The human interaction recorded for eternity by this *āyah* is said to have been Abū Bakr’s visit to a Jewish Midrash, an ancient commentary on part of the Hebrew scriptures, attached to the biblical text. Here, he came upon a certain Finḥāṣ who was in discussion with an assembly of Jews. Finḥāṣ turned to Abū Bakr and said, “By God, O Abū Bakr, we are not in financial need of God; rather He is in financial need of us. If He was in no need of us He would not ask for cash advances and investments, as your colleague [Muhammad] claims.” Abū Bakr felt exasperated and incensed. Consequently, he slapped Finḥāṣ on the face. Then Finḥāṣ went to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) and said, “O Muhammad! Look at what your fellow did to me.” Then the Prophet (ﷺ) turned to Abū Bakr, asking him, “*What was it that made you do what you did?*” Abū Bakr replied, “O Messenger of Allah! This man uttered blasphemy saying that Allah is poor and they [Yahūd] are rich.” Finḥāṣ denied saying that. Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed the *āyah*, “**Allah has in truth heard the comment of those who said, ‘Behold, Allah is wretched and we are rich...’**” The *āyah* in effect vindicates an Islamic position of publicizing the clear facts of revelation, in contradistinction to a Yahūdī position of deleting, concealing, or obscuring those same facts, in this case, the encounter between Abū Bakr and the Jews at the Midrash.<sup>363</sup>

The lesson that foreshadows this one has been the one setting the record straight on the details, developments, and debilitations of Uḥud. From this engagement emerged a Qur’anic advantage for Muslims in all times to come. This is Allah’s (ﷻ) assessment of all inside information pertaining to how dual-loyalists and turncoats disrupted the Islamic war effort from within, and how they tried to put a damper on the call-to-arms by the leadership of Muhammad

(ﷺ) in Madinah. And then were revealed these *āyāt* that illuminate, beyond the slightest doubt, the intrigue and machinations of the Yahūd in their specific war against Allah (ﷻ), His last Prophet (ﷺ), and His supportive Muslims. These *āyāt* serve as a red flag for Muslims to be as cautious in dealing with the Yahūd as they were with the *munāfiqs*. And here, in Allah's (ﷻ) words, preserved as they are in this piercing Qur'an, Muslims are shown that Yahūd's moral crimes are of a magnitude dwarfing all others. How could anyone say that God is poor or hapless?! *Nastaghfir-allāh*. These Yahūd not only said that, they went ahead and rescinded their agreements with the Muslims. Previously, they had not only betrayed their covenant, but, in acts of unparalleled insolence, they had killed off Allah's Prophets (ﷺ).

These *āyāt* here amount to a partial register of Yahūdī abominations. Of course Allah (ﷻ) has exhaustive knowledge of all their hideous acts and odious facts. And in His own way, He will have them suffer, and suffer at great cost. Verbalizations may just be words but they give advance warning of the ensuing practical opposition to Allah (ﷻ), His Prophets (ﷺ), and the faithfully committed Muslims. The Qur'anic articulation of their *kāfir* words and statements serve to bring them to account for their unindicted behaviors in previous scriptural episodes. Their verbal abuse of Allah (ﷻ) — saying that He is financially pathetic and economically pitiful — should live in the memory and hearts of all human beings who cherish, honor, and value Allah (ﷻ).

Another one of their accursed acts is their legendary, unwarranted, and unjustifiable assault on the lives of prophets (ﷺ). This *āyah* speaks about, and to, the Yahūd at the time of Muhammad (ﷺ) about crimes against prophets in bygone history. Some may ask, "But what is the crime of the Yahūd who are not personally and directly responsible for crimes against prophets that were committed many centuries and generations ago?" Or, "But what does this have to do with the Yahūd who are Muhammad's (ﷺ) contemporaries? They are not the ones who killed those ancient prophets. And besides, no soul shall bear the burden of another." This issue, and its companion one characterized as the crime of *deicide*, has nearly always troubled

Jewish-Christian relations. For almost 2,000 years, many Christians, especially in the Roman Catholic Church, held that Jews were complicit — to some degree — in the persecution and eventual crucifixion of Jesus (ﷺ). But finally two events in Euro-Christian history put an end to this generational guilt. The first was the Reformation in which the Protestants broke from the Church of Rome; these reform-minded Christians developed many sects that accorded Judaism and the Old Testament preferential and even privileged status. And the second was during the mid-1960s when the Catholic Church issued an encyclical in which Jews of today are not to be blamed for the acts of their ancestors in the time of Jesus (ﷺ).<sup>364</sup>

In this living Qur'an, however, all Muslims have a reminder of the Yahūdī historical attitude that is not renounced or repudiated by its contemporary incarnation. Rather, there appears to be much contemporary Yahūdī approval of biblical Israeli relationships with the prophets (ﷺ). According to the knowledge of this writer, there is no public and pronounced denunciation of the Israeli *propheticide* that is inextricably part of scriptural and prophetic history. To complicate matters even more, there appears to be a type of “Jewish” pride in this obnoxious Israeli history. Consider the following from Robert Lindsay, an independent journalist from California,

This fascinating video from the Tel Rumeida district in Hebron in the [West Bank] shows outrageously arrogant Orthodox Jewish Israeli settlers threatening Christian peacemakers — threatening to break their cameras, threatening them with death, and cursing Jesus. The words are shocking, “We killed Jesus and we’re proud of it! We’ll kill you and the Palestinians both! This is our land — God gave it to us! F\*\*\* you and your Jesus!”

Note that this radical Jew takes pride in killing Jesus. This is a longstanding theme of many Orthodox Jews. Those who are angry about the Deicide have a right to be upset at those particular Jews who openly take credit for it.

But if Jews really want to significantly reduce the Deicide charge (echoing Gilad Atzmon), why don't they

apologize on behalf of their ancestors? After all, the Jews have demanded apologies of everyone else for their anti-Jewish behavior. If such a move stood a chance of significantly reducing anti-Semitism, wouldn't it be a risk worth taking?

But that's not the Jewish way — never has been. Along with “never forgive” and “never forget,” let us remember, is “never say you are sorry.” And so the sorry cycle continues.<sup>365</sup>

This would mean, if public Yahūdī attitudes are being correctly appraised, there is a contemporary Yahūdī solidarity with the ancient deportment and conduct of those who were facilitating the murder of some of Allah's Prophets (ﷺ). And because of this, today's Yahūd, who do not absolve themselves of that criminal behavior against prophets, humanity, and ultimately God, should be made to feel they are socially responsible for this “historic continuity.” It is at this level of contemporary Yahūdī complacency that Allah (ﷻ) says to them, “...try out the agony of combustion [the Fire]” (3:181). The punishment is as severe as the crime. And the Yahūd, no doubt like everyone else, are to be held up to the weighty standards appropriate to the committed crimes. This inferno awaiting the Yahūd is compensation for the worldly civil wrongs, legal injuries, and wrongdoings that give them the pompous hubris to bury the unspeakable crimes of their historical coreligionists. Is it any wonder, then, that these Yahūd, who were ready to support *kufr* in the Arabia of Muhammad (ﷺ), are now ready for the same in America and in “Israel”?

There is another dimension to the Yahūd who were living at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). In addition to the other prophets (ﷺ), they also attempted to kill Muhammad (ﷺ). Their first attempt was in Madinah where they tried to collapse a wall on him; and in their second attempt, they offered him poisoned mutton to eat. In both cases the Yahūd were unsuccessful. Their anticipated penalty is only fair and wise as Allah (ﷻ) does not mistreat or abuse anyone. And it is not rational to expect Allah (ﷻ) to treat disobedient humans

in the same way He treats obedient humans, or to care for committed humans in the same way He deals with rejecting humans, as some *āyāt* confirm,

**[For], would We treat those who have committed themselves to Us and do righteous deeds in the same manner as [We shall treat] those who spread corruption on earth? Would We treat the [Muslims who are] conscious [of Allah’s power] in the same manner as those who are belligerent [toward Him]? (38:28).**

Now as for those who indulge in sinful doings, do they think that We place them, both in their life and their death, on an equal footing with those who have committed themselves to Us and do righteous deeds? Unfavorable, indeed, is their judgment (45:21).

Or should We, perchance, treat those who yield to Us as [We would treat] those who remain lost in criminal behavior? What is amiss with you? On what do you base your judgment [of right and wrong]? (68:35–36).

Because of this peculiar Yahūdī combination — their historical traits and their contemporary attitudes — Allah (ﷻ) refers them to how their acts, deeds, and craftiness will end up, “...**taste the agony of the flames due to what your hands have exhibited.**” And Allah (ﷻ) is never unfair to His subordinates. All of these censures, rebukes, details, and scenarios are presented to the Yahūd as they continue to entrench themselves into their historical psychological legacy. Whether they will have a real taste of it in this world, whether they will be acquainted with it in the next world, or whether they will sense their destiny at the time of death, on the Day of Resurrection, all of it will unfold in Allah’s (ﷻ) good time.

These Yahūdīs actually had “conditions” they expected the Prophet (ﷺ) to meet, and if he could not, they were not prepared to accept his prophethood. They wanted Muhammad (ﷺ) to bring



them a miracle or ritual sacrifice from heaven. They said if Muhammad (ﷺ) would do such a thing they would be willing to believe in him. Forget about the message, which they claimed to have a historical affinity with; just bring us a miracle!

Think about the real-time encounter between these Yahūd in Madinah and Muhammad (ﷺ). The *āyah*, “**Behold, Allah has bidden us not to believe in any apostle unless he comes to us with burnt offerings [or sacrificial overtures]...**” (3:183) speaks to the Yahūdīs Ka‘b ibn al-Ashraf, Mālik ibn al-Ṣayf, Finḥāṣ ibn ‘Azūrā and others. They said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “O Muhammad! You claim that you are Allah’s Messenger and that Allah has inspired and revealed a book to you. But Allah has instructed us in the Torah not to believe in an apostle unless he brings us burnt offerings and as these offerings descend from heaven the fire should have a soft crackle to it; if you are able to bring us such offerings we will endorse you.”<sup>366</sup>

This claim of theirs is yet another one of their fabrications and prevarications. And Allah’s (ﷻ) answer roundly lambasted and scolded them. Well attuned to the history and substance of revelation, these Yahūd actually wanted Muhammad (ﷺ) to produce a miracle, even though they knew that miracles were only meant to substantiate the validity of scripture and the authenticity of prophets. If their approach to Muhammad (ﷺ) was a litmus test for prophethood, then what have they to say about the manifold prophets who came to them with miracles and marvelous events manifesting the power of Allah (ﷻ)? Zakariyā and Yaḥyá (ﷺ) were two such relatively recent prophets, and so what legitimate reason can be given for persecuting them? Why did the Yahūd of those times not support them? And then why were they killed? The fact of their history, attitude, and frame of mind is that they are neither truth seekers nor apostle pleasers. They are Yahūd. And similarly today, why do they not come out of this Israeli shell and cleanse themselves of this foul character that is condemned in the incontrovertible Qur’an?

The Muslim homework in these *āyāt* is to understand, learn, and then avoid the human behavior that had become a stylemark

of the Yahūd. These *āyāt*, like many others before and after them, illustrate the fact that human nature in its Yahūdī manifestation is conscience lacking and culpable. This Yahūdī predisposition toward demeaning Allah (ﷻ) extends itself to disgracing humanity. And along the way through scriptural history the Yahūd spared little time in dishonoring the apostles and prophets (ﷺ). The presumptuous statements by these conscienceless Yahūdīs are quoted in this eternal Text to caution coming generations. Imagine how thick-skinned and hard-boiled human nature is when it comes up with such words as, **“Indeed, Allah is poor and we [Yahūd] are rich!”** When such talking clay gets the impression it can get away with pronouncing such statements, it goes on to the behavioral level and begins to kill prophets without reason or mandate. This is a serious crime against the God of humanity, the prophets of humanity, and humanity itself. And the Yahūd stand indicted, awaiting the harshest punishment for their discourtesy and offensive activity against Allah (ﷻ).

The main issue here is that the modern Israeli and “Jewish” extension of those errant and deviant Yahūdī generations has not emerged from such historical Yahūdī evildoing with a statement of dissociation. At times, the current “Jewish” Israeli manner of action and conduct gives the impression that these contemporaries are proud of this type of “Israeli” history. This historical continuity between the criminal Yahūd of prophetic times and the criminal Israelis of today binds them all in a guilt of psychological affiliation and social confederation. It is true that today’s Israeli Jews are not killing prophets as did their predecessors; but today there are no prophets around for them to kill. Instead these Israeli Jews are killing innocent people, elderly men, infant children, widowed women, orphans, and civilians who share the scripture of those prophets. Hundreds, even thousands, of years separate the crimes of historical Yahūd from today’s Israeli Jews; but the facts of these crimes have not been assailed or repudiated by their co-religionists today. Therefore, this means that a contemporary Israeli’s reticence over such crimes is tantamount to being an accessory. It is a crime to hide those crimes, it is a crime

to rationalize or silently acquiesce to those crimes, and it is also a crime to continue the behaviors characteristic of those crimes. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

*When a crime is committed on earth anyone who is physically present, but opposed to it, is reasoned to have distanced himself from the crime; while anyone at a distance from the crime, who is in agreement with it, is reasoned to have been an accessory to it.<sup>367</sup>*

### Hoarding Wealth Is Consistent with Persecuting Men of God

The cluster of *āyāt* here delineate a human trait: how elitist power responds to the existence of wealth in society; in particular, the Yahūdī attitude toward finances and money is highlighted. These Yahūd had the chutzpah to say in human language what is not reconcilable in human nature, “**Allah is dispossessed and we are prosperous!**” This same psychological material also uttered, “**Verily, Allah has trusted that we not commit to an apostle until he brings us a sacrifice to be devoured by the fire!**”

The whole episode is configured in divine terms to bring the Yahūd back to their senses so that they may fulfill the terms of the pledge they signed with the Prophet (ﷺ) upon his arrival in Madinah. Some of those terms in the Madinah document relate to the financial obligations of Yahūdī citizens. As the Islamic State in Madinah was being consolidated, these Yahūd began to realize that Islam is spreading, Muhammad (ﷺ) is gaining, and the momentum is not on their side. Contributing financial resources to such a growing Islamic reality was not something suitable to their elitist status. The incisive and insightful words of Allah (ﷻ) here deliver an ultimatum to these conniving Yahūd. They had shown no inclination to acknowledge the truth about Muhammad (ﷺ). And their prophet-denying attitude had to be exposed in its entirety, all the way down to its historical depths. That this Yahūdī temperament was being corroborated by these glowing *āyāt* gave some comfort to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ).

How do you sum up a people who are known to have killed “their own” prophets? How do you comment on an Israeli history that is bloodshot with attempts on the lives of prophets? How do you construct a human court to deal with the magnitude of this historical crime along with its modern manifestations?

**Those who are stingy with the provisions given to them by Allah should not consider it [their stinginess] to be in their interest — it is to their detriment. On the Day of Resurrection they will be manacled with the amounts they withheld. And to Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and earth. And Allah is most acquainted with what you do (3:180).**

This open-ended *āyah* is inclusive of all individuals and societies, themselves abundantly blessed with Allah’s (ﷻ) provision, but who resist spending on and giving to the needy. Its inclusiveness would not only admit Madinah’s Yahūd who balked at honoring their initial agreement with Muhammad (ﷺ), but also elitists, people of status, wealthy individuals, and the affluent classes of society. The rationale for clinging to their personal wealth is that they figure it is in their interest to do so. They believe that spending or giving money to the poor is eventually a way of losing it. This notion is not an individual’s aberration; it is a mass psychology, a public mindset, and a social norm.

The Qur’an here is obviously deconstructing this mental attitude. The plain words of this evident Qur’an foretell that all withheld wealth will become, on the Day of Resurrection, burning chains around the owners’ bodies and necks. This is not only a declaration of an intention to inflict harm but also a source of impending danger. The problem in the understanding of such individuals is that they think they are restricting the flow of their own money; however, in reality, they are inhibiting the flow of something — wealth — that belongs to Allah (ﷻ). In many cases, those who are not conscious of Allah’s (ﷻ) seamless integration in man’s psyche and activities are socialized to believe that the

wealth they have “earned” belongs to them, and thereby, they have a “right” to determine how it is disbursed. The fatal flaw in their psychology is in the area of ownership; those who try to rival Allah’s (ﷻ) absolute dominion, one of the key characteristics of *shirk*, turn out to be the most arrogantly flagrant. They are parsimonious with the provisions given to them out of Allah’s (ﷻ) liberality. Allah (ﷻ) is generous to them, while they are selfish and cheap when expected to pass on Allah’s (ﷻ) wealth. It will take a thorough overhaul of social psychology to securely entrench the idea that whatever wealth a person temporarily possesses does not belong to him; it belongs in perpetuity to Allah (ﷻ). And what a human being transiently owns cannot eclipse what belongs in eternity to Allah (ﷻ).

If man takes time off from the fast lane to think for a moment, he will realize that everything in existence belongs to Allah (ﷻ), even his cells, organs, and body. What happens to man, what happens to human nature, and what happens to society when there is a surplus, affluence, and opulence? When man puts his psychology into physical and material high gear he forgets that he came into this world penniless, moneyless, and stone-broke, and that in the course of his life, he gained from Allah’s (ﷻ) opportunity, bounty, and luxury. Within the short stretch of a lifetime when Allah (ﷻ) asks (!) him to spend of what He has given him, he refuses, being reluctant and recalcitrant. He is no longer able to think through his short life and understand that it was Allah (ﷻ) who supplied him with whatever is in his hands. If Allah (ﷻ) gives millions, why is it so difficult for man to give thousands? And if Allah (ﷻ) gives thousands, why cannot man give hundreds? Materialistic man wants to stash away and stockpile his wealth while Allah (ﷻ) is entreating him to be more generous in passing on what Allah (ﷻ) has equipped him with, be it money, agricultural produce, livestock, property, commercial commodities, or anything of market value. Why should anyone hesitate? What is he going to take with him to the approaching life? His bank accounts? His savings? His certificates of deposit or stock certificates? He will eventually part with this wealth: better to part with portions of it voluntarily during earthly life than to part with all

of it involuntarily at the end of life. And as was the case before his birth, all this wealth will revert to its True Owner, **“And to Allah belongs the estate of the heavens and earth.”** The relatively small percentage man contributes in this world will go ahead of him and become the best investment in the world to come.

Avarice is as ancient as Adam’s (آدم) two sons. In biblical teachings avarice, an excessive love of wealth or possessions, is considered one of the seven cardinal or “deadly” sins. Like the other cardinal sins, avarice or greed, is a distorted form of love.<sup>368</sup> It is the opposite of the virtue of liberality. Notwithstanding the very faint influence of scripture on Western societies, nevertheless, the New Testament often speaks of the dangers of inordinate concern for wealth and possessions. Jesus (عيسى) taught, “...a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke, 12:15); and warned, “...it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew, 19:24); and similarly, in another verse, “One cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew, 6:24). Avarice calls to mind the image of the rich but insecure and reclusive miser, fingering his gold. It may not be a coincidence that the Latin word *miser*, meaning a greedy, stingy person, comes from the same root as *miserable*. A miser is a miserable, wretched person — a Scrooge.

*Avarice* is making an idol of wealth and possessions, and is sinful because such excessive possessiveness, by subordinating all else to its achievement, corrupts moral life. In the highly commercial, acquisitive, capitalist society, few would seem to be free of its temptations. Psychologists have noted that unbridled economic competition, with its attendant insecurity and fear of failure, leads to an intensified quest for possessions. One of the evils of being enchanted by the love of possessions is a self-absorption that closes a person off from the real needs of others. The outcome or product of avarice is hardness of heart toward the widow, the orphan, and the poor. The needy are forgotten and unnecessary poverty and suffering are allowed to persist. The sins of avarice often are the sins of omission. Like the other deadly sins, avarice is self-love in one of its most dangerous forms.

It is in this psychological quandary that the Yahūd have located themselves. The truth-telling Qur’an spares no words to denude their latent but preponderant mental life. These Yahūd do have a homeland — it is the terrain of finances and accumulation of wealth. Their historical trait is to amass so much of it that they actually begin to feel in no need of Allah (ﷻ) or His otherworldly incentives and compensations. When Allah (ﷻ) speaks of compounded benefits in a life to come He is nothing but remote to these wealth-saturated Yahūd. When Allah (ﷻ) speaks of men “loaning Him money” He is doing so to motivate man to spend on the needy, the poor, and the destitute; but Yahūdī psychology processes these divine inducements as “God being in need!” They would mockingly ask why God would be in need of a cash advance or a temporary provision of money from them; and then they would make fun of God’s promise that He would intensify their capital in a future life. And, sinking even lower, these Yahūd have the gall to equate Allah’s (ﷻ) generous offer with their compounded and calculated interest. Besides, Yahūd and all people of wealth are not told to give Allah (ﷻ) money in a literal sense; that is physically impossible as Allah (ﷻ) is not an approachable physical entity. Rather the wealthy are to give to the poverty-stricken, the indigent, and the moneyless, and by so doing, they are giving to Allah (ﷻ).

**Certainly, Allah has heard the annunciation of those who said, “Verily, Allah is poor while we are rich.” We will register their affirmation, and their unjustified murder of prophets; and We will say, “Taste the torment of the flame. This is due to what your hands have obliged.” Indeed, Allah does not mistreat human subjects (3:181–182).**

The Yahūd are notorious for having a distorted concept of Allah (ﷻ). You can find it in their misleading and warping religious references. Their misconceptions of Allah (ﷻ) are matched only by their misbehavior against Him. That is why Allah (ﷻ) proclaims, **“We will register their announcement [that Allah is**

**poor].”** In a sense, Allah (ﷻ) is saying that We want Yahūd to know they will not “get away with it;” that We want them to understand We are ever observant of their foul words and nasty behavior; and, that We will never forget their offense and insolence. Yahūdī crimes throughout the ages have to be placed on public record because these crimes resurface throughout their generational solidarity with the perpetrators of such fiendish crimes. If they have a consistency, it is their ability to recreate these crimes against humanity, against the apostles of humanity, and against the Creator of humanity, “[...and We have filed] **their killing of prophets without warrant [for such an act].”**

The history of these Israelis is replete with a series of their criminal bouts against the Prophets of Allah (ﷻ). As far as their penchant for attacking people of God, the Yahūd are unique in human history. The contentiousness with these men of God throughout history has always been related to the Yahūdī character, which places its “kind,” “race,” and “ethnicity” above the truth of prophets and scripture. If prophets are unable to fit into this Yahūdī Israeli eccentricity, then tough luck for these prophets even if they have Hebrew features. The Israeli genealogy that binds them to Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham (ﷻ), has become their historical legacy; they take on any “deviant” prophet or “false” apostle who exposes their partiality and unconventional social behavior. Their last and most obvious campaign was to make ‘Īsá (ﷺ) a heretic and then kill him. Some of them even took credit for assassinating him.<sup>369</sup>

This holy Registrar, the Qur’an, is filled with other *āyāt* referring to the abhorrent and detestable character of these Yahūd. The following *āyāt* speak volumes about their disgusting and flagrant behavior with Prophets, Apostles, and men of Allah (ﷻ),

**Certainly, those who deny the power presence of Allah [in social reality], and kill the prophets without sanction and also kill people who demand justice [on earth], relay to them the good news of a painful punishment (3:21).**



**We have taken the covenant of the Children of Israel and sent them apostles; whenever an apostle would come to them with whatever they disliked they would either condemn them as liars or condemn them to death (5:70).**

The biblical Prophet Isaiah was killed by Manasseh, a king of Judah.<sup>370</sup> Isaiah, on royal instructions, was tortured to death on a tree trunk for preaching to men in power the necessity of morality, ethics, and abhorrence of perversion and social vices. Prophet Yaḥyá (ﷺ), otherwise known in Latin languages as John the Baptist, was killed by Herod — king of the Jews (Matthew, 14:6–8).<sup>371</sup> Zakarīyā, Yaḥyá’s father (ﷺ), was in a likewise manner killed (Lamentations, 2:20) as he, too, stood for scripture against the validity of the king’s marriage. This demonstrates that once the Yahūd have the power they will use it in a criminal way against religious leaders and religious mystics who, in the mold of scripture, will not compromise principles and values.

Yahūd should never be able to hide or disguise these atrocious acts. If anything, they should denounce and distance themselves from these crimes. In proportion, Allah (ﷻ) assigns to Yahūd a blistering penalty: the flames of eternal fire, **“And, indeed, Allah does not do injustice to human subjects.”** The Yahūd say, **“Indeed, God is ill-fated and we are fortunate...”** and when no one is around to take them to task for these false claims they arrogantly assault, attack, and annihilate Prophets of Allah (ﷺ). **“[All this horrible condemnation] is due to what your hands have done...”**

Here, Allah (ﷻ) reminds and reduces the Yahūd to their true size, which they superficially outgrew as a result of abundant wealth and copious riches. Thank Allah (ﷻ) for this Qur’an that gives us the true proportion of things, putting everything and everyone in the real positions they belong, and exposing all those who are crooked and hell-bent on God-denial.

Then the form of speech turns to Muhammad (ﷺ), lifting his spirit, relieving him of pressure, and telling him not to be burdened by this wicked human nature that dwells in a segment of humanity called Yahūd,

**And if they try to discredit you, they have similarly tried to discredit other apostles before your time who came to them with evidence, psalms, and enlightening scripture (3:184).**

There will be people who will adhere to truth when they recognize it and there will be people who will be repulsed by it. Muhammad (ﷺ) is not the first apostle to be questioned and spurned by these types. History is rife with Yahūdī efforts to pronounce unfit and then reject Allah's Messengers and Emissaries (ﷺ).

### **The European Origin of Anti-Semitism**

In today's Yahūdī-dominated media world, any reference to this Yahūdī character becomes suspect. Anyone who so much as breathes a whisper of Jewish misdeeds in the world is immediately recast into a spiteful and hateful stereotype — à la Nazis in the Third Reich — that galvanizes hostility against Jews simply because they are Jews. But the Qur'an is not a book of stereotypes or of conventional and formulaic conceptualizations. To reverse this knowledge that comes to humanity from Allah (ﷻ), the Yahūd have worked hard at monopolizing their claim to biblical history, biblical prophets, and biblical experience. To countermand the full thrust of the truth, as spoken in this fact-filled Book, they have gone on the offensive, refashioning sympathetic human emotions into a guilt complex by invoking the specter of anti-Semitism. The term *anti-Semitism* was coined in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr, an anti-Jewish polemicist in Germany, to describe antipathy for the Jewish people. The term is incorrect as it refers to Jews only while excluding the other Semitic peoples;<sup>372</sup> nevertheless, by control of the media and public opinion it has become synonymous with the Jews. Hence, any talk of anti-Semitism is automatically processed as anti-Jew.

Through the centuries hostility to Jews and the Jewish religion has been an enduring feature of numerous causes: political, social, cultural, economic, and religious. Depending on the social

and cultural conditions, anti-Semitism has taken on a wide variety of forms. In the Greco-Roman world Jews and Judaism were subject to discrimination and persecution. Where Greek power was dominant, anything non-Greek was considered barbaric. The Jewish tradition was thus regarded with contempt. It was only when Christianity emerged in the first century CE that Jews came to be viewed not only as contemptible but also as demonic. In its advocacy of anti-Jewish attitudes, the Church drew upon Hellenistic ideas that had penetrated into the Jewish faith. For a number of Jews the Torah was to be interpreted in allegorical terms, and such a conception was interpreted by Christianity's high clergy as a Jewish rationalization for separating religious meaning from ritual observance. Revival movements in the ancient Jewish world — the proponents of which believed themselves to be the true Israel — also provided a source for the Christian conviction that a resurgent Jewish faith constituted fulfillment of biblical teaching. Further Gnosticism,<sup>373</sup> which grew out of the attempt to harmonize Hellenistic thought with the Jewish tradition, added to the Christian denigration of the Hebrew God. Finally, the Pharisaic<sup>374</sup> spiritualization and universalization of Judaism intensified the Christian determination of delivering the good news of the New Testament to all people. Christianity thus utilized features inherent in Hellenized Judaism to shape its own identity, making itself distinct from the faith that had defined its origins.

With the emergence of the Christian community, anti-Jewish sentiment in the Greco-Roman world intensified. The early Church believed itself to be the authentic heir to the promises given by God in scripture. It fancied that Jesus' (ﷺ) messiahship would usher in a new era in which the true Israel would become a light unto nations. Such a vision of Christian community evoked hostility against the Jewish people, who were regarded as apostate and unrepentant. This animosity was fueled by the Gospel writers who described Jesus (ﷺ) attacking the religious hierarchy of the Jewish nation. The Church taught that what is now required is circumcision of the heart rather than obedience to the law: Christians are to remain faithful not to the Torah but to Christ. In proclaiming this Christian message Paul

emphasized that the Hebrew people had been rejected by God, and that the new covenant had taken the place of the old. In the Epistle to the Hebrews this animus between the Jewish people and the Christian community was heightened — Christ was regarded as the true eternal Temple in opposition to the earthly and temporal cult of Jerusalem. Such a contrast would also be found in the Fourth Gospel, which differentiated between the fulfilled spiritual universe of Christianity and the fallen world of darkness represented by the Jews. The New Testament thus laid the theological foundation for the negation of Judaism and the Jewish people.

Following New Testament teaching, the Church fathers developed an *Adversos Judaeos* tradition that vilified the Jews. According to these ecclesiastics, just as Jews were guilty in the past of indecency, so they have continued to be a lawless and dissolute people. For this reason all future promises would apply solely to the Church. Appealing to scriptural prefigurations, the Church fathers attempted to demonstrate that the conflict between the Church and the synagogue would inevitably favor the disciples of Christ. Thus, separated from the Christian message of salvation, the Jews were considered to have been rejected and thereby subject to God's wrath. Furthermore, the Christian community, rather than the Jews, would now constitute the elect. This view represented the culmination of the messianic vision alluding to the ingathering of all people to Zion. The Christian faith, the religion of the Roman Empire, would serve as the vehicle for bringing God's redemption to humanity, but the Jews would suffer rejection and misery because of their unwillingness to accept Jesus (✝) as the Messiah. Destined to wander in exile, they would never find peace. Jewish law, supplanted in this way by Church interpretations of the meaning of Christ's death, would now make way for the Christian faith alone to offer salvation to the world.

This "Christian" history, laden with Semitiphiles and Semitiphobes, gestated predictably into what today is called *anti-Semitism*. The ancient Church-synagogue hostilities continued into the European Middle Ages. During the centuries of the European Crusades, Jews were massacred throughout Western Europe.

Although some Christian leaders issued perfunctory condemnations of such barbarism, the masses, religiously conditioned by medieval Church doctrine, continued to attack those who stubbornly clung to the Jewish faith. Christian hostility was further intensified by a number of charges leveled against the Jewish population. Repeatedly Jews were accused of murdering Christian children whose blood would be mixed into unleavened bread for Passover; such allegations of ritual murder spread from country to country and many Jews were victimized for supposedly committing these atrocious acts. Jews were also accused of blaspheming the Christian faith in their sacred literature, and as a consequence copies of the Talmud were burned.<sup>375</sup> In addition, the Jewish population was blamed for causing the Black Plague, which was rumored to have spread because Jews poisoned the wells. Those who were perishing in the Christian onslaught as a result of these allegations prayed for vengeance. In faithfulness to God, these Jewish martyrs went to their deaths confident that Christians would suffer eternal torment for their sins.

During the European Middle Ages the Jewish community was detested throughout the Christian world, the prevalent public impression in Western culture being that of a “demonic Jew.” Repeatedly during this period Jews were accused of possessing attributes of both the devil and witches. As the personification of evil, they were relegated to a subspecies of the human race. Jews were also perceived as magicians par excellence, about to work magic against the Christian community; this belief served as the basis for the charge that the Jewish population desecrated the host (meaning Christians) and committed acts of ritual murder. Yet while it is true that Jews did engage in magical practices, they were excluded from non-Jewish circles of sorcerers and witches, as Jewish magic was dependent on the power of good rather than the demonic realm. It may be said that some of these allegations were based on ignorance and fear, and some on a repelling and repulsive trait of some Jews. Nonetheless the masses attacked the Jews in their pursuit of demons, and in the onslaught thousands of innocent victims lost their lives.

Although the Jewish community was expelled from France in the 14th century CE, negative images of Jews continued to play a role in French culture. Catechisms, the life of Jesus (✠), and canticles (a hymn derived from the Bible) portrayed the Jewish people as tools of Satan. In addition, tracts abounded, reminiscent of the denunciation of Jews in the European Middle Ages. In England, Jews were similarly vilified even though the Jewish nation was expelled in 1290 CE. German Jews were also detested — such hostility was most powerfully expressed in Martin Luther's *Against the Jews and the Lies* (1542).<sup>376</sup> Such publications were followed by a wide range of treatises that denigrated Judaism and the Jewish people. Thus despite the existence of powerful court Jews throughout Germany, the Jewish masses lived simple lives and endured considerable hardship during this period; while away from the flow and ebb of public opinion, among them were those who used their knowledge of how things work to build their usurious financial empire.

Similarly in 14th-century Spain, Jews came to be regarded with suspicion and hostility. Measures were taken against the Jewish community, and consequently many Jews embraced (in public) the Christian faith to escape attack. Such apostasy — a trend resisted by Jewish leaders — as well as the Christian onslaught on Jewry led to the decline of the *aljamas* (Jewish communities). During the 15th century the Church initiated a new form of persecution. Under the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Inquisition was established to purge New Christians — Jewish converts to Christianity as opposed to Old Christians of pure blood — who were suspected of practicing Jewish customs.<sup>377</sup> Tribunals established throughout Iberia applied tort to extract confessions from the guilty — those who refused to confess were cast to the flames. Finally, at the end of the century, an Edict of Expulsion was enacted to rid the country of its Jewish and Islamic adherents, who were regarded to have polluted the Christian population. This whole convolution of Europe pertaining to its non-Christian population, and particularly to its Jewish population says much about so-called Christians and so-called Jews.

It is an insult to the human mind to say that Jewish elites in today's world are still discriminated against and a sub-class of citizenry anywhere they are in Europe, America, Asia, or Australia. They have successfully hijacked the entire Semitic designation and made the whole world believe they are the only and true Semites on earth. And furthermore, no one is permitted to think of Palestinians as Semites, especially when they are more Semitic than their Euro-Israeli adversaries. Under the weight of this heavy social, political, and ethnic re-engineering, no one has the capacity to counter this worldwide Jewish "established fact" with the less expressed fact that Israel and its Jewish supporters as well as its non-Jewish supporters (Christians and Muslims) are anti-Semitic.

When the pseudo-Christian, Church-sponsored, European Inquisition, which was responsible for more atrocities visited on Muslims than Jews (one would not know that if he was thinking outside the reference of this immutable Qur'an), intensified its efforts to root out Islamic and Jewish beliefs in Iberia, the Marranos fled to other countries for safety from their "Christian" persecutors.<sup>378</sup> Many sought refuge in Portugal, where they led an outwardly Christian life while selectively and secretly observing Jewish practices. Following Spanish precedent, the Portuguese Inquisition was established around 1536, attempting to track down Marranos wherever they lived. Other Marranos were driven to find homes in more distant lands. Both Ottoman Turkey and Salonica accepted Marrano refugees from Christian oppression in the 16th century. Still others travelled north and east, going to Antwerp, Venice, Ancona, and Bordeaux; in the next century Marranos settled in Amsterdam, Hamburg, and London.

Yet another place in which violent public reprisals, led by Christians, targeted Jews was 17th-century Poland. Polish Jews were massacred by Cossacks under Bogdan Chmielnicki.<sup>379</sup> In the wake of this "Christian" onslaught the Hasidic movement encouraged religious pietism, but was severely criticized by the traditional rabbinic establishment.<sup>380</sup> While the Jewish community was torn by this conflict, attacks directed against the Jewish population by other non-Jewish populations continued. Such hostility was paralleled in

Russia. Initially Jews were prevented from settling in the country, but with the annexation of Polish territories to Russia in the 19th century, Jews became part of the Russian empire. However, in the ensuing years, Jews regarded by Christians with suspicion and contempt were quickly expelled from the villages they resided in.

During the early modern period in Western countries, the commercial interests of the bourgeoisie, coupled with centuries-old, Christian-founded prejudice against Jews and Judaism, evoked considerable hostility toward the Jewish population. In Germany, merchants protested against the competing racial and financial instincts of Jews. Jewish trade, they believed, would destroy the economic life of the country and pollute the Christian population. Similar objections to the Yahūdī religion of high-finances were expressed in France, where the bourgeoisie resisted Jewish settlement despite the fact that the nobility regarded Jews as financially useful. In Britain, Jews were also subject to virulent criticism, and attempts to simplify procedures for Jewish naturalization and to authorize Jews to own property were met with considerable resistance. In the USA, however, Jews gained a broad measure of freedom as the country struggled to achieve its independence from England. Nonetheless, despite many of the advances made in the 17th and 18th centuries, Jewish life did not significantly depart from medieval patterns of existence. Stereotyped as foreign and strange, Jews were subjected to discrimination and persecution during the early modern period.

Under the banner of the Enlightenment, English “free-thinkers” sought to ameliorate the condition of the Jews.<sup>381</sup> Such attempts, however, were countered by other writers who attacked Jewry with arguments founded upon rationalist ideological formulations. In France, Protestants influenced by the Enlightenment attempted to refute charges against the Jewish population. Yet despite such “progressive” attitudes, they were unable to free themselves from traditional assumptions about Jewish guilt and divine retribution. In addition, many of the major thinkers of the age encouraged Judeophobia. In Germany an attempt was made to present Jews in a more positive light, but here as well the rise of



national self-awareness provoked antipathy toward the Jewish population. Such philosophers as Kant, Fichte, and Hegel wrote disparagingly of both Jews and Judaism.<sup>382</sup>

At the end of the 18th century the spirit of the Enlightenment stimulated Christian Europe to seek the amelioration of Jewish life. With the establishment of the Napoleonic era, Jewish existence was revolutionized. The summoning of a Great Sanhedrin in France paved the way for Jewish emancipation, improving the position of Jewry throughout the European continent.<sup>383</sup>

In the midst of such social upheaval German Jewish reformers attempted to adapt Jewish worship to modern conditions. To the consternation of Orthodox Jews, Reform temples appeared throughout Germany. Yet ironically, many enlightened Jews influenced by the Romantic movement were uninterested in the offerings of Reform Judaism. Instead of providing a basis for the resurgence of Judaism, the movement undermined confidence in traditional belief and practice, thus intensifying Christian antipathy to the Jewish way of life.

In Russia, the aim of emancipation was to bring about the assimilation of the Jewish community; the Tsarist program was driven by centuries-old Christian hostility for the Jews. From the Jewish side, responses to these moves throughout Europe to improve the plight of the Jews were mixed. Whereas traditionalists tended to fear that such steps would undermine Torah Judaism, progressives enthusiastically embraced the new freedoms and opportunities. The gentile reaction was equally ambivalent. Although liberals, generally closet atheists, ardently campaigned for equal rights, many conservatives, generally Christians, feared the consequences of such agitation. Thus, at the end of the second decade of the 19th century, outbursts against the Jewish population spread from country to country.

In the ongoing conversion of 19th-century Europe away from its fanatical and irrational Church impulse, Jewish apologists sought to improve the condition of the Jewish population. In England, Benjamin Disraeli, the Tory Prime Minister and a prominent Jew, formulated a theory of the Jewish race which served as the basis for

his quest to grant civil rights to British Jewry.<sup>384</sup> His advocacy of upward Jewish social mobility, however, provoked a hostile response from various critics who were not liberal enough for their time. They still belonged to the intolerant, medieval, and Church-centered Europe, and not to the emerging, progressive, enlightened, and secular Europe of the future. Such disparagement was similarly a central feature of French life, as evidenced by the Damascus Affair. In this incident, the president of the French Council sided with the Damascene French consuls who accused Jews there of ritual murder. Despite the peaceful conclusion of this matter, this medieval charge gave rise to widespread anti-Jewish sentiment in France. In addition, the myth prevalent throughout Christendom of the Wandering Jew, who was driven from his homeland for rejecting Christ, became a predominant image in French period literature.<sup>385</sup> This image, compounded with anti-Jewish allegations of French socialists, stimulated French Judeophobia.

Gentile contempt for Jewry resulting in the periodic whipping-up of anti-Jewish hysteria expressed itself in yet another bout during the latter half of the 19th century, when the European Jewish population suffered further popular revulsion. In Germany, numerous advocates of German racial superiority as well as metaphysical writers denigrated the Jewish people, leading to the formation of political parties which propagated anti-Jewish attitudes. At the same time the research theses of Christian biblical scholars tended to undermine the traditional Jewish belief in the authority of scripture. Similar attitudes were expressed by a variety of French authors who denounced both Judaism and the Jewish collective. Such hostility provided the background to the Dreyfus Affair, which erupted at the end of the century.<sup>386</sup> Accused of treason, Alfred Dreyfus was sentenced to life imprisonment but subsequently exonerated. The hatred engendered by his trial led a number of Jews to question whether Jewry could ever feel secure without its own land. During this period Russian Jewry also experienced widespread gentile reactions to financially overlording Jews, culminating in the ethnic cleansings of 1881. Profoundly affected by such massacres, many Jews immigrated to distant lands; others sought to make a social

breakthrough by means of a revolutionary struggle. Aware of domestic insurgent agitations, the Russian authorities became increasingly alarmed. Their concern was intensified by the publication of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which maintain that the Jewish people conspired against society to achieve world domination.<sup>387</sup>

In the years leading up to the First World War, Jews became scapegoats for the problems afflicting German society. Objections were raised against the assimilation of German Jewry, and numerous Christian writers protested against the pernicious influence of Jewish attitudes. In Russia, during the war years (WWI), anti-Jewish Christians accused Jews of espionage and collaboration with the authorities. With the onslaught of the Bolshevik Revolution, Russian authorities condemned what they believed to be an international Jewish conspiracy, and ethnic cleansing of the Jews occurred throughout the country. In the years following WWI a series of unverifiable tracts and articles were produced to implicate Jewish involvement in the revolutionary movement and illustrate the existence of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. During this period British writers also condemned Jewry for their dishonesty as well as participation in the revolutionary struggle. In the USA, too, Jews were subject to discrimination, and a number of writers blamed the Russian revolution on the involvement of Jewish agitators, behind-the-scenes agents, and infiltrators. French suspicion of Jews was similarly animated, especially its perception of Jewish influence in world affairs.

Anti-Jewish attitudes that can be traced to the financial kingdom of the Jews during the war years (WWI) crystalized in Hitler's conception of the Jewish people as an evil race seeking world domination. Hitler, who was twice decorated for bravery in WWI, blamed the war, the Treaty of Versailles, and the subsequent invasion of Germany by France on Jewish agitation and intrigue. While in prison for militantly opposing the dismemberment of Germany in 1924, he began his well-known autobiographical work, *Mein Kampf*, in which he outlined his impressions of how there were only cosmetic differences between left-wing, liberal (Marxist) Jews and nationalist (Zionist) Jews,

But any indecision which I may still have felt about that point was finally removed by the activities of a certain section of the Jews themselves. A great movement, called Zionism, arose among them. Its aim was to assert the national character of Judaism, and the movement was strongly represented in Vienna.

To outward appearances it seemed as if only one group of Jews championed this movement, while the great majority disapproved of it, or even repudiated it. But an investigation of the situation showed that those outward appearances were purposely misleading. These outward appearances emerged from a mist of theories which had been produced for reasons of expediency, if not for purposes of downright deception. For that part of Jewry which was styled Liberal did not disown the Zionists as if they were not members of their race but rather as brother Jews who publicly professed their faith in an unpractical way, so as to create a danger for Jewry itself.

Thus there was no real rift in their internal solidarity. This fictitious conflict between the Zionists and the Liberal Jews soon disgusted me; for it was false through and through and in direct contradiction to the moral dignity and immaculate character on which that race had always prided itself.<sup>388</sup>

Between 1930 and 1933 over six million Germans were unemployed; such a situation led to the rise of Nazism with its anti-Jewish policies. Nazis blamed Jewish involvement and agitation in trade unions as one of the major causes of German unemployment. Once the Nazis gained power, they instituted a series of anti-Jewish policies culminating in *Kristallnacht* during which Jewish properties and buildings were destroyed. This event was followed by the invasion of Poland in September 1939 where some Jews were mowed down. The next stage of Hitler's plan of racial liquidation took place with the invasion of Russia in 1941. Initially mobile killing battalions began the elimination of Russian Jewry; this method of

killings was supplemented by the same camps in which Jews were said to have been gassed to death. During these years of “Christian” military reaction to “Jewish” financial supremacy, many ordinary Christians and Jews were unaware of the real forces at odds with each other, which brought in their historical grudges to justify such a polarization of prejudices. The number of Jews who succumbed to this European theater of ethnic cleansing remains a matter of dispute (from 600,000 to 6,000,000). The anti-Jewish sentiment went underground and it will resurface whenever world Jewry flexes its financial muscles and begins to pull its economic strings.<sup>389</sup>

The Yahūd have finally come full circle. Their geographic dislocation has fostered their psychological alienation. And in turn this has been used by them to rationalize their social anti-God and anti-humanity moves wherever they may be in other people’s countries and nations. Anti-Jewish attitudes are simmering below the surface in Germany, Austria, and even Britain where neo-Nazis and ultra-right-wing groups continue to advance theories of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. French hostility toward this Jewish monetary dominance has also led to the condemnation of Zionism, the occurrence of a series of attacks on Jewish property, and the resurgence of a nationalist counter-Jewish party. Poland and Russia too have witnessed the rise of anti-Jewish sentiments despite the absence of a sizeable Jewish community. Most significant are the principled anti-Yahūdī postures throughout the Arab and Islamic world that are challenging monopolistic Yahūdī financial power, presenting itself as the military barricade otherwise referred to as Israel.

For 20 centuries at least, anti-Jewish intellectual persuasion and public opinion have been a constant feature of the *Jewish/goyim* relationship. What can be done to neutralize this enduring bitterness? The Christian Church has gone a long way in this regard. In the last few decades the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches have issued numerous decrees denouncing “anti-Semitism” (a Semitism that means Jews only) and encouraging positive Jewish-Christian encounters. In addition, history-neutral Christian scholars have attempted to understand the “Jewishness” of Jesus (ﷺ) — modern Christology, they believe, must be purged of any anti-Jew-

ish bias. God's enduring covenant with the Jewish "nation" has also repeatedly been emphasized, and various theories have been propounded to illustrate that Jesus' (ﷺ) death and "resurrection" do not replace God's revelation on Mount Sinai.

As for the relationships between Muslims and Jews, these will not be easily resolved in a short period of time. They will require a common approach to justice and an unprejudiced acceptance of fairness and equality. The contemporary, public Jewish *carte blanche* issued to the racist and expansionist settler nation-state of Israel unnecessarily galvanizes all Muslims and people of conscience against everything Zionist Israel stands for. And by extension, they are repulsed by everything official Judaism sanctions or passively endorses when it comes to Zionist Israeli offenses, violations, and occupation of free peoples' lands. Jews the world over have not condemned Zionist Israel for the evil that it is. Some of this Jewish cowardice has to do with a false notion of solidarity and a hollow sense of historical binding with the "people of Israel." Until and unless the vast majority of today's Jews distance themselves from the sordid historical and religious legacy of "Jews" they will continue to fuel their own predicament. In a sad and demented way the Jews are their own worst enemies. In trying to protect themselves they become vulnerable; in trying to live in a kingdom of money they are forfeiting a kingdom of nationhood; and in building a military for security purposes they summon the resolve of their victims who would initiate corrective military measures. All this would have been impossible in the absence of such Jewish-cum-Israeli offenses, aggression, and invasion.

Likewise, the Muslims of today have to surmount their own self-induced problems. The Zionist-imperialist alliance is in charge of "Islamic" governance around Israel. This is equally so of those regimes that are officially at war with Israel and those officially at peace with it. All of them are guilty of political *kufur* and military *shirk*. And they have been able to hide this fact from the Muslim populace simply because that populace has not listened to this Qur'an. Muslims cannot and should not take Jews to task because Jews have abandoned their scripture while they are unable

and unwilling to take themselves to task for abandoning the Qur'an. A crime is a crime whether it is committed by a Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim. No amount of self-glorification, traditional legacies of grandeur, or religious words of redemption are going to expunge the repugnant acts of despicable claimants to religion, upon whose behaviors the vast majority of their peaceful coreligionists are judged.

With this being said though, there are two qualifiers that have to be stated in this context. The first is that Muslims, in addition to their struggle against tyrannical secular governments in their own lands, are at odds with political Judaism (Zionism), represented by the blood-spilling state of Israel, on the one hand, and with political Christianity (imperialism), represented by the governments of such nation-states as Britain, France, the United States, and Russia, on the other. The second qualifier is that the Muslims themselves are trying to break out of the combined forces of *nifāq*, *shirk*, and *kufr* that have formed the *mushrik-Yahūdī* coalition of the willing. And for the first time now in hundreds of years the committed and struggling Muslims are fighting back not as reactionaries but as pro-actionaries. Had all decent Jews and devoted Christians been able to evaluate this condition, unencumbered by their own prejudices and false pride, they would have no choice but to root for these committed Muslims.

Once again we find ourselves in the company of Allah's (ﷻ) relaxing words. And we realize that the acclamations of those who are ready to anoint everything Israeli and Jewish are both offensive and repulsive, especially when these Israelis reflexively dishonor prophets and show disrespect toward Allah (ﷻ). The entire Israeli public behavior stems from a group sense of being rich, affluent, and self-sufficient. Their whole character today (even though there is a small percentage of Jews who are against Israel, making them the exception to the rule) is rooted in this psychology, which is judged unfit and culpable at its source, not just by its symptoms. The Muslims who understand these living words will always have problems with Jews who are dwelling in a living lie when they say that God is second rate and they, the Jews, are first rate.

This notion seems to be so deep in their group psychology that they are unable to object to a God-denying, justice-defying, and guilt-ridden Israel — an Israel so transparent now, that all people of good will are able to see it for what it is. The nation-state of Israel has its deep psychological roots in the mentality that brags of God being poor while the Jews are rich. The savage and damning use of brute force by Zionist Israel can only be justified by a people who have a history of and do not think twice about killing prophets. If you can kill a prophet you can certainly kill a Palestinian. It seems like the Jews, left to their own devices, will not be able to purge themselves of Israel, its crimes, and its atrocities. It will have to be the committed Muslims who will relieve them and the world of this false nation-state, this false ingathering of Jews, and their false god of mammon.

### **The Common Destiny of All Peoples of Scripture**

Far beyond our control, the history of all people of scripture is intertwined, and the binding factor affecting them all is their ultimate destination. Thus the Qur'anic words turn to the striving Islamic workers around the Prophet (ﷺ), and focus their attention on what is worthy of their efforts and struggle. Whatever the range of challenges around and whatever the twists of human nature that abound, the redeeming features of patience, the certainty of Allah's (ﷻ) power presence, tolerance, and will-power should be the final concern of everyone who is in this godly program together, hence these placid and assuring words,

**Every mortal is bound to experience death; but only on the Day of Resurrection will you be compensated in full [for whatever you have done] — whereupon he that shall be wrested away from the Fire and brought into Paradise will indeed have gained a triumph. For the life of this world is nothing but a merriment of self-delusion. You shall most definitely be tried and tested in your possessions and in your persons; and indeed**



you shall get word of many hurtful things from those to whom revelation was granted before your time, as well as from those who are *mushriks*. But if you remain actively patient and consciously aware [of Allah’s power presence in your worldly affairs] — this, behold, is the most demanding task (3:185–186).

It is not enough to know that every human or bio-organism is going to die and perish. It is expected of us to attend to this fact as we make decisions in life. This *āyah* says to us unequivocally: no one is going to live forever. Everyone, without exception, is going to die one day. This includes people who are good and people who are bad. Death will visit those who have honored their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) — those who were dedicated all the way to the war front — as surely as it will visit those who have failed to honor their commitment — those who stayed at home when they should have been at the front lines. Everyone is going to undergo the moments of death; and that includes the committed Muslims who forgathered around this Qur’an as well as the others who ran away from it. Every individual is going to endure the onset of death whether he was courageous and courted death on his way to Allah (ﷻ) or whether he was a coward and tried to avoid death at every turn in his life. Every minute, “someone” will be going through the final phases of dying whether he is a president or a pauper. There will be no exceptions, no exemptions.

The words of Allah (ﷻ) are the eternal truth. Every expression of life will appreciatively taste death — jinn as well as *ins* (humans), the angels, and even the bearers of the Throne.<sup>390</sup> Everyone is going to sip from this cup. And everyone will part company with life as we know it. No one will have a choice; once the cup arrives you will have to sip from it. It will not discriminate and no one may decline.

The everlasting fact is that it is Allah (ﷻ) who is real, while all other fleeting things and reactions in life are surreal. It is Allah (ﷻ) who will outlast everything as He predates everything. We humans — whatever our status in this life — will eventually expe-

rience what it feels like to have our bodies and souls come apart. Then we will regain our consciousness and intelligence on the Day of Judgment to face the sum total of our works and exertions in earthly and worldly life. Our final destiny depends on how good or how bad our functioning in the world was. On the way to that Day of Judgment we will experience a type of subliminal existence that serves as a preface to our final fate. In the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), “*The grave is a garden of bliss from Paradise or a cavity of fire from Hell.*”<sup>391</sup>

A fortunate person is the one who is moved away from the post-judgment fire and enters Paradise. That is indeed the most any committed Muslim may wish for — a lifetime struggle that delivers the best result. “**Whoever wants to be pried away from the Fire and delivered to Paradise...**” (3:185) should pass on while committed to Allah and the Last Day and while doing unto people what he would want people to do unto him. This guarantees Allah’s (ﷻ) rights and people’s rights. All the merriment and indulgences of life — from delicious food, carnal fulfillment, or social status — is a fancy and a fantasy,

**But no, [O men], you prefer the life of this world, although the life to come is better and more enduring (87:16–17).**

**And [remember], whatever you are given [now] is but for the [passing] enjoyment of life in this world, and for its embellishment; whereas that which is with Allah is [so much] better and more enduring. Will you not, then, use your reason? (28:60).**

And to this end a hadith puts it this way, “*By Allah! The comparison of this world with the world to come is like dipping your finger into the ocean — what have you by doing so obtained [from the ocean]?*”<sup>392</sup>

Death, the cessation of life, is a topic that raises almost innumerable philosophical, theological and social questions. Closely associated with the question of death — usually restricted to

human death — is that of immortality, which, in turn, is usually understood as the immortality of the human soul. As soon as we discuss immortality, we are confronted with questions concerning the nature of such an immortal soul. Is it divisible? How is it related to the (mortal) body? Stating the problem in this fashion seems to demand that we have a dualistic conception of a human being as one creature composed of both body and soul. If so then is the body really the prison of the soul, as Plato suggested? Or is the material body influenced by an immaterial mind as Descartes insisted and, if so, how does this influence take place? Thus, the notion of death raises questions concerning the nature of a human being, and the relation between the brain and what we might call the mind, or perhaps, the spirit or soul?<sup>393</sup>

Some Muslims out of ignorance or out of expediency confuse two distinct words in the Qur'an: *nafs* and *rūh*. The word *nafs* and its derivatives are mentioned around 300 times in the Qur'an, while the word *rūh* and its derivatives are mentioned around 21 times. Translators, who render these two words interchangeably as either *spirit* or *soul* without spending much time on capturing whatever subtle or ethereal differences there exist between the two words and their precise and distinct meanings, seem to be glossing over the distinction. Or perhaps, they themselves are not clear enough on the difference so as to be able to render an explanation in another language. The general approach to this seems to be that both of these words pertain to the metaphysical and therefore any attempt at fine-tuning their meanings will only lead to hair-splitting arguments or to philosophical discourses that may detach an average Muslim from the general flow of meanings that comes from an accessible Qur'an. And this reasoning is, generally speaking, not entirely off course. And so to avoid technical nuances and long-winded literary arguments, a few words on the subject will suffice.

It seems that the word *nafs* refers to the conjunction of life (vitality and spirit) and matter (physical material and substance) that makes it possible for humans to be mortal. This particular binding or adhesion suffers a breakdown or dissolution, which is more commonly referred to as *death*. The body has its biological

and physiological functions, which are observable and at least partially understood. But the *rūḥ* is one of those facts that are beyond human perception. *Rūḥ* appears to be the everlasting essence of life itself, which is extracted from the divine reality — that is, from Allah (ﷻ),

**...And then He forms him in accordance with what he is meant to be, and breathes into him of His *rūḥ*: and [thus, O men], He endows you with hearing, and sight, and feelings as well as minds; [yet] how seldom are you grateful! (32:9).**

Similarly, *nafs* appears to be the receptacle or the catalyst that sustains bio-life. Its functions are spiritual, emotional, and mental. It is in this area that man may be able to think, memorize, remember, feel, and sympathize. In this sense it would become linguistically functional to refer to the *nafs* as the *human spirit* and to the *rūḥ* as the *human soul*. That is why the human *nafs* is mortal and terminal while the human *rūḥ* is sacrosanct and inviolate.

Having said the above, the issue is still open to discussion in the Islamic scholarly establishment. Some Muslim scholars say that the *nafs* or the *rūḥ* are peculiar only to a living body. Others say that the *nafs* or the *rūḥ* are a translucent, subtle, and light luminance of sublime origin which is settled at the core of living organs. The *nafs* or the *rūḥ* moves in the living being as water moves inside plants. The circulation of this fine and ethereal light is the essence of life.

The fact in this scenario of inevitable death is in the consequence. Whatever expression of human life — man, woman, rich, poor, Semite, non-Semite, learned, ignorant, clergy, layperson, etc. — that is able to be diverted from the Fire will be successful. Muslims who know they are passing through life should always be aware of this final destiny. The measure of their success shall be the capacities they develop by the end of their lives to dodge the eternal fire. What gets man driven into everlasting fire is his indulgence in foolish, sensuous, and senseless behavior. The life forces related to satiation and attraction are indeed tempting. And man

is prone to enjoy as much of these tempting and seductive forces of life as possible; and by doing so he courts the everlasting fire. Life should be accepted as a responsibility: a social force that binds one to a course of action and obligation, not frivolity, gaiety, or hilarity. When man succumbs to material enchantments and earthly captivation he falls short of fulfilling his role as Allah’s (ﷻ) trustee on earth. This is a dangerous course not only for individuals but also for cultures and civilizations that live on self-delusion and self-deception. Man has to reorient himself and his society away from the delusive charms of the materialistic lifestyle to a self and a society that are keen on gaining Allah’s (ﷻ) protection all the way to everlasting bliss and salvation. This is more easily spoken and written than practiced.<sup>394</sup>

### **Ahl al-Kitāb’s Influence Is Unsettling But Transient**

Coming out of the aftermath of Uḥud and its death challenges, the timely words of Allah (ﷻ) prime the Muslims to another type of assault: the temptation of surrendering to the leisure and luxury of a mundane, materialistic, and mercenary lifestyle. Lest we lower our guard, He says to us,

**You shall most certainly be tried in your finances and your selves; and indeed you shall listen to those who have received earlier scriptures and to the *mushriks* to the extent that it will harm you. But if you remain positively patient and you guard against Allah’s corrective power that indeed is a most demanding task (3:186).**

The Muslims are cautioned against falling prey to the psychology that comes with making fantastic amounts of money and that has a soft spot for people of prior scripture — nominal Christians and titular Jews. This *āyah* awakens real-life Muslims to the vulnerability of falling under the influence of greed, temptations, and the combination of ungodly forces that interlock among people who previously belonged to scripture in a working sense, but no longer

do, and their *mushrik* accessories. The Qur'anic word *latasma'unna* means that you Muslims will listen to and pay heed to those who are of previous scriptures — the token Christians and the trifling Jews of the world today.

In other words this *āyah* is saying that we the Muslims should be alert and sensitive to this fact lest we fall under the sway of such false Christians and Jews; and if we do, then we ourselves become false Muslims. And how do Muslims come to be persuaded by these types? Most of the time the answer is the media, and Hollywood in particular. There is an entertainment industry that is busy reversing the meanings of this *āyah* and the Qur'an it is in.

A close look at the leadership positions in the Hollywood industry reveals the disproportionate amount of Jews who are in control. How deeply Jewish is Hollywood? According to Joel Stein, a writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, at the end of 2008, here are some of the top executives who run the largest studios in Hollywood: News Corporation President Peter Chernin (Jewish), Paramount Pictures Chairman Brad Grey (Jewish), Walt Disney Company Chief Executive Robert Iger (Jewish), Sony Pictures Chairman Michael Lynton (Dutch Jew), Warner Brothers Chairman Barry Meyer (Jewish), CBS Corporation Chief Executive Leslie Moonves (Jewish, his great uncle was the first prime minister of Israel), MGM Chairman Harry Sloan (Jewish) and NBC Universal Chief Executive Jeff Zucker (Jewish). Harvey and Bob Weinstein (both Jewish) founded Miramax Films.<sup>395</sup>

The film industry has put out more than an insignificant amount of motion pictures about child abuse, promiscuity, and even satanism. Jewish influence in Hollywood and the media is still not “the talk of the town.” No business in the world should be so firmly associated in the public mind with the Jewish elites as the American entertainment industry. If there is a common thread that runs through the general Hollywood orientation, it is the hostility to all forms of organized religion. In the post-Inquisition and post-Holocaust Western world, no one can dare speak in public about the incongruous influence Jews wield on some of the most morally offensive “entertainment” coming out of Hollywood, lest they be

branded as bigots. If only people could match the real Jews of Hollywood with the fictional Jews of the “chosen people,” we may have a new brave world.

Jewish clout in the entertainment industry peaked in the 1930s and 1940s during the period often referred to as Hollywood’s Golden Age. At that time, as now, seven of the eight major studios were owned and operated by Jewish families who wedded together *An Empire of Their Own*.<sup>396</sup> One 1936 study says that out of 85 names on the production level 53 were Jews. In 1940 around 80 million ticket paying customers went to the theaters every week — more than 60% of the national population at that time.<sup>397</sup> Nowadays, Hollywood’s motion pictures play out in people’s minds as they do on screen. Cinematic illusions are invented, sustained, and scattered around the world, reaching viewers on all continents of the world from Switzerland to Swaziland.

Images of Muslims not only have an effect on global audiences and international movie makers but on the Muslims themselves. Contemporary feature presentations quickly make their way from the cinematic wide screen to the video stores and then to the average joe’s living room and bedroom. If one checks his local television guides, he will see that since the mid-1980s, appearing each week on screen, are 15–20 recycled movies projecting Muslims and Arabs as subhuman, semi-human, and pseudo-human: *The Sheik* (1921), *The Mummy* (1932), *Cairo* (1942), *The Steel Lady* (1953), *Exodus* (1960), *The Black Stallion* (1979), *Protocol* (1984), *The Delta Force* (1986), *Ernest In the Army* (1997), *Rules of Engagement* (2000), and a whole host of others in the new genre of terror-fanatic Muslims after 9/11. With the constant recycling of the same stereotypical images, year after year, generation following generation, and with improving technological means of delivery, it is not hard to understand how these powerfully produced Hollywood images can have a devastating effect on Muslims who are exposed to these presentations. Hundreds of movies reveal Western protagonists spewing out unrelenting barrages of uncontested slurs, calling Arabs *assholes*, *bastards*, *camel-dicks*, *pigs*, *jackals*, *devil-worshippers*, *rats*, *rag-heads*, *towel-heads*, *scum-buckets*,

*buzzards of the jungle, sons-of-dogs, sons-of-whores, sons-of-unnamed-goats, and sons-of-she-camels.*

From beneath this mound of accusations, stereotyping, and villainization, there are still some Muslims who are “uncle Toms” and “house negros.” They want to kiss the hand that slaps them. They have managed to delude themselves into believing they can compete with these evildoers to undo the effects and results of Hollywood through Hollywood. This is what is meant by Muslims coming under the spell of “biblicals” and *mushriks* who are comfortable in their dehumanization of Muslims and Arabs. Muslims who are Qur’anically absentminded no longer are able to have an ambition of having their own clean cinema industry — their own “Hollywood.” In the realm of “representative” politics, there are those lobbying Muslims who are consistent with this approach and are convinced that an Islamic order cannot be established unless they go through the political aisles of power belonging to *mushriks* and “biblical” imperialists and Zionists.

Allah (ﷻ) says, **“You will be tested with reference to your own selves and wealth, and you will give a listening ear to ‘biblicals’ and *mushriks* to a degree that will harm you...”** And the psychological damage that has come from this “Islamic” receptive ear has done much injury to Islamic self-awareness and the project of Islamic self-determination. One can see right through the facade of artificial Muslims who are in the political and mass media company of superficial Christians and Jews. The Muslims idle along — psychologically inferior, socially outcast, and politically irrelevant — while their handlers become the masters, overlords, and commanders. This proves one thing for sure: the Muslims of today, whose behavioral model is corporate and academic America, do not read the Qur’an with their consciences and minds.



Concealing Scripture Hurts People, Not Allah (ﷻ)

And lo, Allah accepted a solemn pledge from those who were granted earlier revelation [when He bade them], “Evince and show it to mankind, and do not hide [or disguise] it!” But they cast this [covenant] behind their backs, and bartered it away for a trifling gain — and how evil was their bargain! Think not that those who exult in what they have thus contrived, and who live to be praised for what they have not done — think not that they will escape suffering, for grievous suffering does await them [in the life to come]. And to Allah belongs the dominion over the heavens and the earth: and Allah has the power to will anything (3:187–189).

Muslims who are in tune with this Qur’an will have to come out and make it clear to people of scripture — those who call themselves Christians or Jews — that they have breached God’s covenant and trust. The Muslims of modern times have cultivated, firstly, a reactionary attitude in which they prove themselves by ritualistically distinguishing themselves from these wayward people of scripture. Secondly, they have an obvious inferiority complex that seeks to mitigate its low-level standing by overlooking the demerits and deceptions of these previous scripturalists who cannot escape the Qur’an’s true statements about Christians and Jews. And these two *āyāt* give exactly this kind of truthful information.

The deep rooted difference between the disciples of the Qur’an and Muhammad (ﷺ) on one side and the adherents of previous scriptures and prophets (ﷺ) on the other side is that the former are very up-front, and public about Allah’s (ﷻ) covenant even if that means they will have to speak up against themselves when they deviate from it. The Judeo-Christian scripturalists, especially the Yahūdī element, cover up and obscure this covenant. The Muslims have to overcome their initial infatuation with the “Judeo-Christian” technological progress, which brought with it the erroneous notion that there is some validity to the Judeo-Christian

social, religious, and thus “biblical” claims. The Muslims ought to know first hand from Allah’s (ﷻ) words that these remnants of biblical times are keen to camouflage the truth. They may even sugarcoat it with their misleading version of history, prophets, and God. The fact that they know what the truth is but are experts at concealing it, and their knowledge of it, has put the inexperienced Muslims in something of a conundrum. This need not happen to Muslims who place the meanings and the background knowledge contained within this Qur’an above all the sweet-talk from these types of covenant spurners.

Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) himself asked these ostensive Bible followers about things which they would not disclose; they would hold back what they knew about such matters. They even tried to change the subject or speak about something else, pretending to have answered the Prophet’s (ﷺ) questions. And they felt good for withholding this information, acting as if they behaved intelligently or in a satisfactory manner.<sup>398</sup>

The *āyah*, “**Think not of those who exult in what they have thus contrived, and who live to be praised for what they have not done — think not that they will escape affliction...**” was revealed to expose the *munāfiqs*. They actually delighted in the fact that they managed to stay behind from the front lines of the battle. When the war-weary and injured Prophet (ﷺ) returned from engaging the armed enemies at Uḥud these *munāfiqs* apologized to him, and appeared to be anxious to be praised for the results of a war they did not participate in.

Whatever the case is, these *āyāt* collectively address all those who conceal their covenant and pretend they have no knowledge of the pledge the Muslims have assumed with Allah (ﷻ), and those who claim they have a pledge with Allah (ﷻ) but fail to honor it by not going to the battlefield after promising to do so. In the case of the Jews, they had the Torah in their hands and if they were transparent about it they would have come out in public and confessed to the fact that the information they have from the Torah reinforces and corroborates the information that is now available in the Qur’an. They could have easily stated there is no significant or

substantial difference between the covenant in the Torah and the solemn pledge in the Qur’an.

Beyond that though is the fact that both the Old and the New Testament are meant for mankind. Therefore, those who are students and teachers of these two glorious books should go public with all the information in them. But the fact-finding words of the Qur’an indicate unequivocally that these Jews and Christians fell short of that obligation. This *sūrah* discussed issues about the Christians not honoring Allah’s (ﷻ) truth as revealed in His Scripture; the *sūrah* also expresses some outrageous and incoherent acts by the Yahūd — especially their contention with the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ). The *sūrah* enlightened the Muslims by chronicling two landmark military campaigns: Badr and Uḥud. And do Jews and Christians have anything to say about these two events except what amounts to doubting and distrusting the fact that Islam is meant to be a *dīn*? Yet if they were honest about it they would come forward and profess that the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) is noted in both the Torah and the Gospel.

This lesson amounts to a scolding of the People of the Book who were conditioned by their respective prophets to proclaim and anticipate the advent of Muhammad (ﷺ). One of the aspects which they should have made public from scripture is the future appearance of this biblically foretold prophet. But instead of preparing public opinion for the coming of Muhammad (ﷺ) they remained silent and oblique about this momentous event in human history. In the jargon of the present, their vested interests may have been responsible for their reticence about Muhammad (ﷺ). As we know from our experience with false Jews and Christians, they prefer to be expressionless and tight-lipped on ideological matters when there is an economic or financial advantage in doing so. What they have really done is to have sold out on the truth in exchange for some trivial worldly gain.

The onus in all this falls on the scholars, theologians, and educators who should be the conduits of scriptural communication. And this is especially pertinent to those who are entrusted with the meanings of this Qur’an. These meanings have to be passed on and

put across to all and sundry. None of this Qur'an, Allah (ﷻ) forbid, may be withheld or deleted from the public mind. On this matter, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, *"Whoever is queried about knowledge and he refuses to disclose it is leashed with a tether of fire."*<sup>399</sup>

The Jews and Christians have done a real job in making both the Old and New Testaments irrelevant to the real world around. Some of these Jews and Christians adhere to what has become a watered-down Bible, which is also strained and skewed. And when someone takes time out to think of why the original Bible did not survive in its original text, the only plausible answer he can come up with is that there were clerical interests, which had to appease state powers while the flock was discarded by both. Some clergymen want fame, others seek monetary gain, and yet others have no shame, but the result of all such activity is a disjointed Bible. Is it any wonder that the Bible means anything to anyone? Had the ingrained truth about the Qur'an and Islam not been so precise and resolute, ritualistic Islam today could have easily fit in as just another sect or denomination of either the Christian or the Jewish faith traditions. The defining distinction between Islam and the Judeo-Christian heritage is that the human interaction with the Qur'an was overt, inclusive, and public whereas the human interaction with the "Bible" was covert, exclusive, and private. The Qur'an, by nature, is meant to be the people's Book. The Bible, by convention, has become the elite's Book. The biblical class of elites traded and bartered some of the quintessential meanings of scripture — such as the Covenant and the foretelling of Muhammad (ﷺ) — for some money, status, or even just to escape the persecution of state power. If anything, this would tell the Muslims how important it is to liberally spread the meanings of the Qur'an. As Imam 'Alī said, "Allah expects the ignorant to learn as equally as He expects the scholars to teach."<sup>400</sup>

## The Connection between Social and Physical Laws

- (3:190) Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed messages for all who are endowed with insight,
- (3:191) [And] who remember Allah when they stand, and when they sit, and when they lie down to sleep, and [thus] reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, “O our Sustainer! You have not created [any of] this without meaning and purpose. Limitless are You in Your glory! Keep us safe, then, from suffering through fire!
- (3:192) “O our Sustainer! Whomsoever You shall commit to the Fire, him, verily, will You have brought to disgrace [in this world]; and such evildoers will have none to support them.
- (3:193) “O our Sustainer! Behold, we heard a voice call [us] to a commitment of faith, ‘Commit to your Sustainer!’ And so we came to confirm [our commitment]. O our Sustainer! Forgive us, then, our sins, and efface our bad deeds; and let us die the death of the truly virtuous!
- (3:194) And, O our Sustainer, grant us that which You have promised us through Your apostles, and disgrace us not on Resurrection Day! Verily, You never fail to fulfill Your promise!”
- (3:195) And thus does their Sustainer answer their prayer, “I shall not lose sight of the labor of any of you who labors [in My way], be it man or woman: each of you is an issue of the other. Hence, as for those who forsake the domain of evil, and are driven from their homelands, and suffer hurt in My cause, and fight [for it], and are slain, I shall most certainly efface their bad deeds, and shall most certainly bring them into gardens through which running waters flow, as a reward from Allah; for with Allah is the most beautiful of rewards.”
- (3:196) Let it not deceive you that those who are bent on denying the truth seem to be able to do as they please on earth;

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي  
 الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ  
 وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا  
 سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تَدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَجْتَهُ  
 وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿١٩٢﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي  
 لِلْإِيمَنِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَأَمْنًا رَبَّنَا فَأَعْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا  
 سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾ رَبَّنَا وَعَانَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ  
 وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ  
 أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمَلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثِيَ بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ  
 فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا  
 وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ  
 تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾ لَا  
 يَغْرَتَكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَأْوَاهُمْ  
 جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي  
 مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ

لِلْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٨﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ  
إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَشَعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَايَتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا  
قَلِيلًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ  
الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩٩﴾ يَتَّيِّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

- (3:197) It is [but] a brief enjoyment, with Hell thereafter as their destination — and how vile a resting-place!
- (3:198) Whereas those who remain on guard concerning their Sustainer [and His power in human affairs] shall have gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide: a ready welcome from Allah. And that which is with Allah is best for the truly virtuous.
- (3:199) And, behold, among the followers of earlier revelation there are indeed such as [truly] commit to Allah, and to that which has been bestowed from on high upon you as well as to that which has been bestowed upon them. Standing in awe of Allah, they do not barter away Allah's messages for a trifling gain. They shall have their reward with their Sustainer — for, behold, Allah is swift in reckoning.
- (3:200) O you who are committed to Allah! Be patient in adversity, and vie in patience with one another, and be ever ready [to do what is right], and remain on guard of Allah, so that you might attain to a happy state! (Āl 'Imrān:190–200).

These last ten *āyāt* of *Sūrah* Āl 'Imrān wind up the discussions, dialogue, and deliberations the Muslims had with Jews, Christians,

and the nominal Muslims who have a split personality and dual loyalty, that is, the *munāfiqs*. At this juncture near the end of the *sūrah*, the Qur'anic discourse turns away from these inter-social entanglements and focuses the Muslim mind on the power of Allah (ﷻ) over the physical and spacious universe.

It has been reported that a company of the Prophet's (ﷺ) disciples came to visit 'Ā'ishah, the Prophet's (ﷺ) wife, and after a brief exchange of greetings, they inquired about anything exceptional she had noticed in Muhammad's (ﷺ) behavior.

She said that one night he excused himself from her company, prepared himself for night prayer, and then throughout the course of his communion with Allah (ﷻ) during the entire night, he cried, wept, and shed plentiful tears. At the time of *fajr* he was approached by Bilāl who came to deliver the *adhān*. Seeing the Prophet (ﷺ) in tears he asked, "Why do you weep when Allah has forgiven you your past and your future flaws?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Woe, Bilāl! Why should I not, when tonight Allah has revealed the following *āyāt*, ***Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed manifestations of Allah's power for all who are endowed with perceptivity...***" And then he said, "Woe to he who reads these *āyāt* and does not think of and think out their meanings."<sup>401</sup>

The human intellect can only display curiosity, amazement, and wonder at the creation of the celestial firmament as well as the world and earth. With all the physical laws that are at work — from the natural and accommodating habitat on earth to the well-calibrated distances to the organized harmony in the universe — there is no assault on man's vital existence, his life-giving surroundings, and his life-sustaining environment. The universal spacio-temporal measurements were custom-made for human survival and sustainability. The galaxies, the planets, and the nebulas at the far end of known existence; the bodies of water from oceans to seas and



rivers; the agricultural produce, forests and jungles, trees that bear fruit and others that do not; the natural resources and elements of the earth, the ecology; the succession of night and day — its summer-to-winter time fluctuations; as well as the seasonal geographies of the Earth from the north to the south poles, all this meticulous, scientific organization and “master-system” can only be understood as evidence of Allah’s (ﷻ) existence, presence, and being. His power, wisdom, and glory attest to His singularity and uniqueness. Any mind absorbed into this coordinated and synchronized network cannot escape the possibility of sensing a purpose for life out of this aligned and dextrous “labyrinth” of stars, heavenly bodies, the macrocosm, the world, the cosmos, the universe, nature, and creation. Anyone who just opens his eyes cannot help but to feel the relevance, bearing, and cogency of Allah (ﷻ).

**But [then], how many a manifestation of Allah [and His power] is there in the heavens and on earth which they pass by [unthinkingly], and on which they turn their backs! And most of them do not even adhere to Allah without [also] ascribing divine powers to other beings beside Him (12:105–106).**

The word *samāwāt*, translated usually as *heavens* does not necessarily mean the biblical *Heaven*, which in Judeo-Christian interpretation refers to the “dwelling-place of God and the angels,” and in traditional Christianity “the ultimate eternal destiny of the redeemed, there to reign with Christ in glory.” In the Bible, Heaven is usually conceived of as high above the Earth. In contemporary theology, the emphasis is more on the quality, transformation, or fulfillment of life, the fully-revealed presence of God, and the perfection of the divine-human relationship, than on a place.

The *āyah*, “**Indeed, in the creation of the heavens...**” should more precisely be translated as, “**Indeed, in the creation of the celestial spheres...**” There are spheres surrounding the Earth. In modern scientific literature they are used as a reference frame to specify the positions of celestial objects in the sky. Their north and

south poles extend over those of the Earth, and their common equator is the projection of the terrestrial Equator.

Included in this domain of observation is the Solar System made up of the Sun and its associated, gravitationally bound members of about a dozen known planets, their six odd satellites, the approximately 5,000 asteroids, the comets, and interplanetary dust.<sup>402</sup> The planets — Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars (the four *inner planets*) Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune (the four *outer gas giants*) and Pluto — and asteroids orbit approximately in the plane of the Sun's equator, and rotate about the Sun in the same direction — counterclockwise when viewed from a north polar direction. There is systematic variation in the character of the planets: the inner planets are comparatively small and dense, and are composed of high-temperature condensates, chiefly iron and metal silicates, while the four outer planets are much larger, and mainly composed of low-temperature condensates, chiefly gases and ices; Pluto is unique and poorly known, and has now been declassified as a planet.<sup>403</sup> The asteroids also show systematic variation of properties with distance from the Sun. The comets, made of ices and dust, lie at the greatest distance from the Sun in a shell known as the Oort Cloud,<sup>404</sup> and are only tenuously bound gravitationally. Much information has also been derived from the study of meteorites which originate from asteroids. It is thought that the planetary system was born about 4.6 billion years ago as a by-product of the Sun's formation, which resulted from the gravitational collapse of an accumulation of gas and dust in this region of the Milky Way Galaxy.<sup>405</sup>

Reading this *āyaḥ*, “**Certainly, in the creation of the celestial elevations and the earth...**” forces a consideration of whatever observations man has made in his generations and centuries of probing space. And such an endeavor can only be embellished by scientific reflections, some of them valid and others invalid. One such observation is the *star cluster*, or a group of stars physically associated in space.<sup>406</sup> Another is the presence of a *magnetosphere*, the region surrounding Solar System bodies having magnetic fields, in which the field is shaped by the influence of the streaming solar wind.<sup>407</sup> In still another sense, this *āyaḥ* could focus man's attention

on Earth's geology, for instance, *plate tectonics* — a model of the structure and dynamics of the Earth's crust, developed in the 1960s to explain and relate observations such as continental drift, mid-ocean ridges and ocean trenches, the distribution of earthquakes, and volcanic activity.<sup>408</sup>

Unlike the interpreters of the Bible, these Qur'anic *āyāt* stimulate the mind to think and to rethink its observations about the physical laws that are at work through the Will of Allah (ﷻ). Why? So that it can discover and acknowledge the particularity of Allah (ﷻ). Sometimes man almost inadvertently stumbles onto the physical laws that are at work to make it possible for him to live, thrive, and survive. One such reckoning is the *greenhouse effect* — a planetary atmosphere warming phenomenon, resulting from the absorption of infrared radiation by atmospheric constituents.<sup>409</sup>

This *āyah* opens up the frontiers and accesses the horizons. The mind is given free rein to think over the skylines. Is there a satisfying definition of the universe? Is it, as defined by modern astronomy, everything in the cosmos and which affects man by means of physical forces? Should this definition exclude anything that is in principle undetectable physically, such as regions of space-time that were, are, or will be irreversibly cut off from our own space-time? And then, is space-time a fundamental concept in the general appraisal of the entire universe, especially according to the special and general theories of relativity? Einstein showed that a complete description of relative motion required equations including time as well as the three spatial dimensions.<sup>410</sup> The form in which time is expressed in relativity theories gives it the mathematical property of a fourth coordinate, or dimension. Is space-time the single entity which unifies both space and time into a four-dimensional structure? In the general theory, Einstein showed that this “fabric of the universe” becomes curved in the presence of matter, and this enabled him to give an elegant account of gravitation which has replaced Newton's theory.

Nefarious are those who try to accuse Muslims of having a regressive religion. Muslims are induced by these *āyāt* to take their minds to the threshold of physical laws as is the case with social

laws. By the purview of these *āyāt* Muslims should study such phenomena as earthquakes and the propagation of seismic waves through the Earth. By studying the velocity of seismic waves, the structure of the Earth and the discontinuities which define its core, mantle, and crust can be more easily ascertained. Similarly, by using artificial explosions to generate shock waves, the structure of the underlying rocks can be determined, and applied to the exploration of oil and gas.

**“And the succession of night and day...”** Consider the *equinox* — either of the two points on the celestial sphere where the ecliptic (a great circle on the celestial sphere representing the Sun’s apparent path during the year) intersects the celestial equator. Astronomically, these are the points at which the Sun, in its annual motion, appears to cross the celestial equator — the *vernal equinox* (right about 3-21 on the solar calendar) as it crosses from south to north, and the *autumnal equinox* (about 9-23 on the solar calendar) as it crosses from north to south.<sup>411</sup> The vernal equinox is the zero point in celestial coordinate systems. Typically, we recognize the equinoxes to be the two days when the lengths of nighttime and daytime are equal. The variation of night and day as they dip below 12 hours or hover above 12 hours is yet another area that may engage the reflective mind.

*Solar time* is time measured by considering the rotation of the Earth relative to the Sun. *Mean solar time* was established as the fundamental measure of clock time before it was realized that the Earth had variable rotation. *Apparent solar time* is time shown by a sundial. The difference between the two can amount to as much as 16.4 minutes by the tenth month of the solar time-keeping system. Then there is *universal time* which is a precise system of time measurement used for all practical considerations and scientific inquiry. Formerly based on mean solar time, it has since 1972 been based on *international atomic time*, a uniform time derived from the frequencies of selected transitions within atoms. Under the International System of Units, the *second* is currently defined as the duration of 9,192,631,770 periods of the radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the cesium 133 atom. This

leads to what is known as *Greenwich Mean Time* (GMT). GMT has become the basis for world time zones, set by the local time at Greenwich, near London, England. Located on the Greenwich Meridian, 0° longitude, it is the reference point from which other time zones are calculated. It was originally established in the United Kingdom (UK) to regularize railway timetables nationally, and later through the pursuit of colonial priorities it became an international time reference. It is now known by some as *coordinated universal time*.

The variation of night and day is the basis for what is called *standard time*, which is the officially established local time adopted by a region or country, plus or minus so many hours from GMT. The Earth can be divided into 24 time zones each based on sections of 15° of longitude. In each of these, standard time is calculated from the position of the Sun at a central point within the zone. In practice, to avoid unnecessary complications in countries which span more than 15° of longitude, zones may be larger. Some countries have more than one time zone, for example in the USA there are seven standard time zones and in continental Europe there are two. Zones differ generally by a whole hour, although there are a few cases of half-hour zones, in particular, India and Iran.

After giving us a feel for His social laws through the defining moments of Uḥud, Allah (ﷻ) transfers us to His physical laws so that we might put our minds to work on His will in the physical, concrete, and tangible world around us. The flow of *āyāt* here demonstrate to every thinking Muslim the organic relationship between social laws and physical laws. They both are initiated and supervised by the Creator. Everything is arranged, controlled, and enhanced with a purpose and wisdom that can only come from Allah (ﷻ). The demonstration of Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence in as far as He is the guarantor of social laws as well as physical laws is obvious only to those who are privileged with insight, astuteness, and a deep perception of reality: *uli al-albāb*.

Scientists and scholars may learn the “mechanics” of physical laws; but it is only insightful intellectuals who are able to detect the purposeful wisdom that binds all the social and physical laws of Allah (ﷻ) together,

Indeed, in the creation of the celestial cosmos and the earth and in the variation of night and day there are illustrations of Allah's power presence for those of core knowledge: those who are conscious of Allah actively, passively, and collaterally, and who are in thinking [and rethinking the issues of] the creation of the celestial elevations and the earth, "Our Sustainer! You have not created these in vain; praised are You; protect us from the pain of the Fire. Our Sustainer! Whomever you admit into the Fire, You have humiliated, and oppressors have no supporters. Our Sustainer! We have listened to an announcer who calls us to [divine] covenant, 'Commit to Your Sustainer;' and so we are committed to You. Our Sustainer! Forgive us our transgressions and pardon our faults and give us our due with the truly virtuous. O our Sustainer! Fulfill Your promise to us via Your apostles and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection for You never fail to honor your assurance" (3:190–194).

After identifying the "mechanical" aspects of physical laws at work, people of reasoning begin to look at the matrix of all these laws working together in an elaborate and systematic way; and they realize that none of this is happenstance, and all of these physical laws serve as an expression of a higher will and a profound knowledge. Moreover, these physical laws correspond to human social laws that also are, when assembled together, a harmonious framework for the activities, pursuits, and efforts of man as an individual, man as a society, and man as a civilization.

Scholars of "core knowledge" are able and willing to affirm this magnificent co-relationship between physical and social laws in two ways. The first is that it has to be authored by an infinite source of wisdom, knowledge, and power; and second, man himself is the subject of this elaborate and prudent interlocking of these corresponding laws: material and social, physical and psychological, earthly and humanly. Once these facts settle into man's conscience he

becomes cognizant of Allah (ﷻ) whether he — the intelligent insightful erudite — is actively engaged in the ups and downs of life, whether he belongs to a “status quo” condition of life, or whether he just tags along with others in their assumption of responsibilities (*qiyāman wa qu‘ūdan wa-‘alá junūbihim*). The scientific facts, discoveries, inventions, and progress are so profound that whatever social status the accessing scientist may have, he in all humility must honor the distinction of Allah (ﷻ) as Sustainer. They remain aware of Allah (ﷻ) whatever their social orientation is, because they mentally deliberate and meticulously research the creation of the universe as well as of the earth. Their conclusion is incontrovertible, **“Our Sustainer! You have not created this in vain — glory be to You; thus shield us from the torment of the Fire.”**

The word *rabbānā*, meaning *Our Sustainer*, is repeated in this short stretch several times because the range of ideas and the analyses of information draw thoughtful scholars to profess that life, existence, man, and universe need a Sustainer. God’s creation leads to the affirmation of God Himself. The human mind was made to think and ponder over the things Allah (ﷻ) created and not Allah (ﷻ) Himself. Our minds are not equipped with the capacity to absorb Allah (ﷻ) in His infinite reality. No one can ever take in the immeasurable and immortal reality of Allah (ﷻ). It is reported that Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) said to his companions who were in deep thought one day, *“Contemplate and reflect on the creation of Allah and not on the Creator, for you will never be able to understand Allah in measures or quantum.”*<sup>412</sup>

**“Exalted are You in Your glory...”** So when these refined scholars hear Allah’s Apostle (ﷺ) summoning them to an allegiance to Allah (ﷻ) they respond promptly, positively, and profoundly. They are attuned to the thoroughgoing reality that the social laws coming from Allah (ﷻ) are harmonized with His physical laws. Where are the scientists today who are able to discover objectively and methodically the social laws that come from Allah (ﷻ) to maintain human justice in the same objective and methodical manner they discovered physical laws placed in the universe by Allah (ﷻ) to maintain cosmic balance and terrestrial order?

Today's "modern" Muslims are so inept and ineffective that they are unable to place these facts on an academic roundtable of esteemed and accomplished scientists. One of the more implacable impediments to this evaluation of Qur'anic socio-physical inter-connectivities by the scientific class of people is the presence of oppressive proxy governments that litter the Islamic hemisphere with injustice and tyranny. Their dictatorial misrule has rendered these *āyāt* into ceremonial hymns to be recited for the benefit of their rhythmic melodies.

By the substance of these *āyāt*, the people who consistently think of and discern the facts embedded into both the physical and social realms are bound to affirm the reality of Allah (ﷻ) and His promise. And what is His promise?

**Allah has promised those of you who are committed to Him and do righteous deeds that, of a certainty, He will cause them to accede to power on earth, even as He caused [some of] those who lived before them to accede to it; and that, of a certainty, He will firmly establish for them the *dīn* [civilization and culture] which He has been pleased to bestow on them; and that of a certainty, He will cause their erstwhile state of fear to be replaced by a sense of security. [Seeing that], they comply and conform to Me [alone], not ascribing divine powers to any beside Me. But all who, after [understanding] this, choose to deny the truth — it is they, they who are truly iniquitous! (24:55).**

As this *sūrah* comes to a close, Allah (ﷻ) responds to those people who are consumed by their limited thoughts pertaining to Allah's (ﷻ) governance of the material and the social spheres of life. Allah (ﷻ) says He will answer the call of males and females, men and women alike,

**And thus does their Sustainer answer their prayer, "I shall not lose sight of the labor of any of you who**



**labors [in My way], be it man or woman: each of you is an issue of the other (3:195).**

but despite this and scores of other *āyāt*, His detractors try to cast the Qur'an and Islam in a male chauvinist light. This *āyah* rebuts such libelers who are quick to stereotype and scandalize Islam and the Qur'an. The certainty that comes from firm knowledge generates a will to live up to the responsibilities that are tied into this affirmation of Allah's (ﷻ) eminence. This will engendered those who have sought exile, have been expelled from their homelands, or have been subjected to harm and injury on a course to Allah (ﷻ) and then had to fight and die for this conviction. As a reward from Him, Allah (ﷻ) will, for sure, efface their faults and admit them to gardens underneath which rivers flow,

**Hence, as for those who forsake the domain of evil, and are driven from their homelands, and suffer hurt in My cause, and fight [for it], and are slain, I shall most certainly efface their bad deeds, and shall most certainly bring them into gardens through which running waters flow, as a reward from Allah; for with Allah is the most beautiful of rewards" (3:195).**

No one could ask for anything more or anything better than this final destination: paradise, bliss, and everlasting life. The discourse above reveals the following observations,

1. Man should continue his scientific research in discovering all that may be available to his range of technological probes and technical investigations. The more the mind pursues its curiosities in this area and confirms its hypotheses about natural phenomena the more it is likely to discover Allah (ﷻ).
2. Information from the Islamic literature recommends for a person, upon arising in the morning, to pass his hands over his face and read the last ten *āyāt* of *Sūrah* Āl 'Imrān, as did the Prophet (ﷺ) and as is mentioned in the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* and other books of Hadith. That is to be followed by *Fajr Ṣalāḥ*.

3. A committed Muslim is required to be conscious and aware of Allah (ﷻ) in whatever circumstance or situation he may be in. Whether a Muslim is energized, not particularly motivated at a given moment, or just “floating along” (*qiyāman wa qu‘ūdan wa-‘alá junūbihim*) he should be alert and attentive to Allah (ﷻ). **“O you who are committed to Allah! Remember Allah with unceasing remembrance (33:41), and “So bear Me in mind, and I shall bear you in mind...” (2:152).**
4. When it comes to works and rewards there is no difference between man and woman — both of them belong to the same species. They both come from one mortal essence. And they compliment each other in their duties, responsibilities, and rights. **“Committed Muslim men and committed Muslim women are each other’s analogue and correlation” (9:71).**

### Muslims Should Not Be Fooled by Appearances

Let it not deceive you that those who are bent on denying the truth seem to be able to do as they please on earth. It is [but] a brief merriment, with Hell thereafter as their destiny — and how vile a resting-place! Whereas those who remain on guard concerning their Sustainer [and His power in human developments] shall have gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide: a ready welcome from Allah. And that which is with Allah is best for the truly virtuous.

And, behold, among the followers of prior scriptures there are indeed such as [truly] commit to Allah, and to that which has been bestowed from on high upon you as well as to that which has been bestowed upon them. Standing in awe of Allah, they do not barter away Allah’s illustrious manifestations [of power] for a trifling gain. They shall have their reward with their Sustainer, for behold, Allah is swift in reckoning.

**O you who are committed to Allah! Be cooperatively patient, and vie in perseverance with one another, and be ever ready [to do what is right], and remain on guard of Allah, so that you might be efficient and accomplished (3:196–200).**

The first *āyah* in this lesson, “Do not be hoodwinked by *kāfirs* who seem to be ‘getting away with it’...” was revealed to blow the cover off the Makkan *mushriks* as they were living in “good times” with abundant luxuries. They were going about their commercial life with profits and revenues. This made some committed Muslims around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) scratch their heads and ask, “Allah’s (ﷻ) enemies seem to be living it up, and here we are virtually exhausted because of our lack of means and wherewithal.” This *āyah* responded to that psychology.

The overall context to which this Qur’anic lesson speaks to is the false comparison between the hard times committed Muslims find themselves in and the leisurely times the *kāfirs* simultaneously enjoy. The fact of the matter is there can be no comparison between the leisure of this world and the pleasure of the *ākhirah*. This world’s delights are quick to dissipate; while the contentment and joy of the next world are abiding, enduring, and unceasing.

Covenant-honoring Muslims should never be fooled by the apparent luxuries of the *kāfirs*. In a short time, such will all be gone. They will be chained into the coming life with their sins and wickedness. The more they seem to be enjoying the extravagance and opulence of this world the more rope they are being given to strangulate themselves with. Their “freedom of movement” for their commercial enterprises and multinational corporations is leading them beyond a point of no return as long as they remain defiant of Allah (ﷻ). Resonating with this meaning are other *āyāt*,

**Say, “Verily, they who attribute their own lying inventions to Allah will never arrive at a happy state!” [A brief] time of fun in this world, and thereafter to Us**

they must return; and then We shall let them taste suffering severe as an outcome of their persistent denial of the truth (10:69–70).

Is, then, he to whom We have given that goodly promise, which he shall see fulfilled [on his resurrection], comparable to one on whom We have bestowed [all] the amusements of this worldly life but who, on Resurrection Day, will find himself among those that shall be arraigned [before Us]? (28:61).

We will let them enjoy themselves for a short while — but in the end We shall drive them into suffering severe (31:24).

None but those who are in denial of the truth would call Allah's power presence into question. But let it not deceive you that they seem to be able to do as they please on earth... (40:4).

We the listening Muslims are expected in our struggle phase to forgo the capricious luxuries of this worldly theater. Our attention ought to be focused on the permanent life where we are looking forward to eternal blissfulness — an honor from Allah (ﷻ) — and this should outweigh all the apparent prosperity and overflowing affluence that the deniers of Allah (ﷻ) seem to, for a limited time, enjoy. If further Qur'anic corroborations are needed, listen,

**[But] verily, as for those who are committed and do what is right, the gardens of Paradise will be there to welcome them; therein will they abide, [and] never will they desire any change therefrom (18:107–108).**

Appearances also work the other way; Muslims may have a tendency to look down on all people of previous scripture because of the recalcitrant activities of their coreligionists. Goodness is good-

ness, regardless of the quarters it comes from, Muslim or non-Muslim. Thus this non-exclusive Qur’an highlights a section of Ahl al-Kitāb who confidently affirm guidance in the Qur’an that does not contradict guidance they had received from earlier Prophets (ﷺ). Such were the likes of ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām (previously Jewish) and his colleagues; and the king of Abyssinia, the Negus (al-Najāshī).<sup>413</sup> This is how the factual Qur’an describes them,

1. They, being bearers of the Covenant, were truly and honestly committed to Allah (ﷻ).
2. They honored the Qur’an by word and by deed as it was revealed to Muhammad (ﷺ). The Qur’an remains the only scripture free of “foul play.”
3. They, by and large, remained faithful to the Old and New Testaments in light of their congruity with the Qur’an.
4. They showed utmost reverence to Allah (ﷻ), which is an expression of covenant responsibilities. They had no reported character blemishes in this regard.
5. They did not commercialize scripture. This means they did not try to rescind or revoke any scriptural directive to gain wealth or power in the hierarchy of government or commercial positions. They honored Muhammad (ﷺ) as they recognized he is the one foretold in previous scripture. These persons deserve to be honored for their integrity and straightforward character. This commendable quality is referred to in other *āyāt* of this objective Book of truth,

**And among the folk of Moses there have been people who would guide [others] in the way of the truth and act justly in its light (7:159).**

As for those to whom We have vouchsafed scripture aforetime, they [are bound to] honor through commitment this one [as well]; and whenever it is [clearly] conveyed to them, they [are bound to] profess, “We have come to believe in it, for, behold, it is the truth from our Lord — and, verily, even before this have we

surrendered ourselves to Him!” These it is that shall receive a twofold reward for having been patient in adversity... (28:52–54).

According to the surviving information in Islamic sources, the Jews who could honor the Qur’an and believe in it were no more than 10 during the time of Muhammad (ﷺ). As for the Christians, there were so many that they cannot all be accounted for. It is said that *āyah* 3:199, “**And, behold, among the followers of earlier scriptures there are indeed such as [truly] commit to Allah...**” came to respond to the psychological and social dynamics that ensued when word of the death of the Negus of Abyssinia reached the Muslims. At that moment, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*Pray for him.*” Those hearing him responded, “Do we pray for an Abyssinian?” And the *āyah* responded to this misconception.<sup>414</sup> Thousands if not hundreds of thousands of Christians saw the Qur’anic and Muhammadi light. This is not surprising when we consider the following,

**You will surely find that, of all people, the most hostile to those committed [to this divine Writ] are the Yahūd as well as those who ascribe divinity and authority to any beside Allah; and you will surely find that, of all people, they who say, “Behold, we are Christians,” come closest to feeling affection for those who are committed [to this divine Writ].**

This is so because there are priests and monks among them, and because these are not given to arrogance. For when they come to understand what has been bestowed from on high upon this Apostle, you can see their eyes overflow with tears, because they recognize something of its truth; [and] they say, “O our Lord! We do believe; make us one, then, with all who bear witness to the truth. And how could we fail to believe in Allah and in whatever truth has come to us, when we so fervently desire that our Lord count us among the righteous?”

**And for this their belief, Allah will reward them with gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide: for such is the requital of the doers of good (5:82–85).**

It should be noted that this long and extended foray into the Christian, Jewish, *munāfiq*, and *mushrik* reaction to the Qur’an and Muhammad (ﷺ) would not have been discussed were it not for the fact that Muslims had become a live and engaging entity — they were struggling, they were sacrificing, they were winning and losing, they were steadfast at times of stress, and they were confident even when it appeared that things were not going their way. And to keep up the momentum, Allah (ﷻ) continues His careful development of the finest human spirit that ever existed,

**O you who are securely committed to Allah! Be mutually patient, and compete in forbearance with one another, and be ever ready [to take to military positions], and remain on your guard with Allah, so that you might be successful (3:200).**

We are duty-bound to be uncomplaining when enduring straitened circumstances, such as hunger, fear, and disease. We are responsible for withstanding the challenges that come from opposing deadly enemies. Our internal psychological front is as important as our external military one.

Our military spirit should never recede. We should always be prepared for military duty and action. In reinforcing this grand resolve, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) made the following comparisons, “A military post for one day for the cause of Allah is better than the world and everything therein,”<sup>415</sup> and “A military position [assignment] for one day and night is better than fasting a month and staying up during its nights...”<sup>416</sup>

Allah’s (ﷻ) power takes precedence over all other powers. Diligent Muslims should factor in the corrective power of Allah (ﷻ) in man’s affairs before they show any fear of man’s militaries

or technologies. If these things are observed and practiced, then the Muslims are on their way to fortune and fate. ■

## Endnotes

189 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Ḥakīm (better known as Tafsīr al-Manār)*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1414AH), p. 97.

190 Narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and recorded in the hadith collections of Imams Aḥmad ibn Hanbal and Muslim.

روى أحمد ومسلم عن أنس أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم أحد كسرت رباعيته، وشج رأسه، حتى سال الدم على وجهه، فقال: كيف يفلح قوم فعلوا هذا بنبيهم، وهو يدعوهم إلى ربهم؟ فأنزل الله: ليس لك من الأمر شيء.

191 Narrated by Ibn ʿUmar and recorded in the hadith collections of Imams Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nisāʿī, al-Bukhārī, and others.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم . يوم أحد : اللهم العن أبا سفيان . اللهم العن الحارث بن هشام . اللهم العن صفوان بن أمية . قال : فنزلت ( ليس لك من الأمر شيء أو يتوب عليهم أو يعذبهم فإنهم ظالمون ) فتاب عليهم فأسلموا فحسن إسلامهم.

192 From the Ṣaḥīḥ of Imam al-Bukhārī.

ورواية البخاري: «كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حين يفرغ في صلاة الفجر من القراءة يكبر ويرفع رأسه ويقول: سمع الله لمن حمده، ربنا ولك الحمد. ثم يقول وهو قائم: اللهم أئخ الوليد بن الوليد وسلمة بن هشام وعياش بن أبي ربيعة والمستضعفين من المؤمنين. اللهم اشد وطأتك على مضر. واجعلها عليهم سنين كسني يوسف. اللهم العن حيان ورعلا وذكوان وعصية. عصت الله ورسوله. ثم بلغنا أنه ترك ذلك. لما نزلت: ليس لك من الأمر شيء أو يتوب عليهم أو يعذبهم. فإنهم ظالمون.

193 **Badr** – a cluster of wells that define a place about 150km to the south of Madinah where the first great battle in Islamic history took place between the first-generation Muslims and the Qurayshī *kāfirs*. It is said that the name *Badr* was the name of a person who claimed the wells as his, and that is how the area acquired its name. But it is most likely a name of a place rather than a man who claimed the place. Some pertinent details of the battle are reviewed below.

The Muslims went out from Madinah to intercept Abū Sufyān’s caravan, which was on its way back from Damascus, heading toward Makkah. This commercial wagon train — loaded with goods, funds, and merchandise — was returning to Makkah at a time when the *mushriks* of Makkah were imposing economic sanctions on Muslim Madinah. Moreover, these same Makkans



had seized all the properties the Muslims had left behind in Makkah when they were forced into exile in Madinah. The Makkans thought they had gained the upper hand by squeezing the Muslims in this manner. However, within two years, Madinah had become a force to be reckoned with. The Islamic State there projected an image of the power of Islam and the Muslims over the whole of Arabia. This worried their *mushrik* enemies, who began to mobilize openly against the new Islamic State. Makkah thus became the center of anti-Islamic and anti-Muhammadi activity.

When word reached Abū Sufyān about the Prophet’s (ﷺ) intention to intercept the Makkan caravan, he immediately called for reinforcements from his *mushrik* allies in Makkah. The Muslims’ Makkan enemies mobilized a force of 1,000 men, including both cavalry and infantry. When Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) heard of this hostile army, he consulted with the other Muslims and assembled a counter-force of 313 fighters. This first Islamic military battalion had only two horses and 70 camels. Most of these Muslim fighters had to walk to the battlefield without even being properly armed for battle.

The two sides converged at Badr, between Makkah and Madinah. Despite the numerical imbalance, the Battle of Badr ended with a decisive victory for the Muslims; simultaneously, it was a catastrophe for the *mushriks*. This battle had a profound effect on both sides, especially the early Muslims. The impact of this first war between the deniers of Allah’s (ﷻ) power and the Muslims — who affirm Allah’s (ﷻ) power — reverberated throughout the region. It was so significant that Allah (ﷻ) referred to it as *Yawm al-Furqān* (the Day of Distinction), “[This you must observe] if you adhere to Allah and to what We bestowed from on high upon Our subject on the day when the true was distinguished from the false — the day when the two armies met in battle. And Allah has the power to will anything” (8:41).

194 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imam Muslim.

اللهم أنجز لي ما وعدتني . اللهم أت ما وعدتني . اللهم إن تهلك هذه العصابة من أهل الإسلام لا تعبد في الأرض.

195 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur’ān*, Volume 1. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 461.

196 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Ḥakīm* (better known as *Tafsīr al-Manār*), Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Ma’rifah, 1414AH), p. 97.

197 Ibid.

198 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qurʾān, Volume 1*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 461.

199 Ibid., p. 462.

200 Narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and recorded by Ibn ‘Asākir.

أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كسرت رباعيته يوم أحد وشج حتى سال الدم على وجهه فقال كيف يفلح قوم فعلوا هذا بنبيهم وهو يدعوهم إلى ربهم عز وجل فنزلت ( ليس لك من الأمر شيء أو يتوب عليهم أو يعذبهم فإنهم ظالمون ).

201 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qurʾān, Volume 1*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 462.

202 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-Aqīdah wa-al-Sharīʿah wa-al-Manhaj, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Muʿāshir, 1411AH), p. 69.

203 Narrated by al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib and recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Imam al-Bukhārī.

لقينا المشركين يومئذ . وأجلس النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم جيشا من الرماة . وأمر عليهم عبد الله . وقال : ( لا تبرحوا . إن رأيتمونا ظهرنا عليهم فلا تبرحوا . وإن رأيتموهم ظهرنا علينا فلا تعينونا ) . فلما لقيناهم هربوا حتى رأيت النساء يشتمدن في الجبل . رفعن عن سوقهن . قد بدت خلاخلهن . فأخذوا يقولون . الغنيمة الغنيمة . فقال عبد الله : عهد إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن لا تبرحوا . فأبوا . فلما أبوا صرفت وجوههم . فأصيب سبعون قتيلاً . وأشرف أبو سفيان فقال : أفي القوم محمد ؟ فقال : ( لا جيبوه ) . فقال : أفي القوم ابن أبي حنيفة ؟ قال : ( لا جيبوه ) . فقال : أفي القوم ابن الخطاب ؟ فقال إن هؤلاء قتلوا . فلو كانوا أحياء لأجابوا . فلم يملك عمر نفسه . فقال : كذبت يا عدو الله . أبقى الله عليك ما يخزيك . قال أبو سفيان : اعل هبل . فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : ( أجيئوه ) . قالوا : ما نقول ؟ قال : ( قولوا : الله أعلى وأجل ) . قال أبو سفيان : لنا العزى ولا عزى لكم . قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : ( أجيئوه ) . قالوا : ما نقول ؟ قال : ( قولوا : الله مولانا ولا مولى لكم ) . قال أبو سفيان : يوم بيوم بدر . والحرب سجال . وجنود مثلة . لم أمر بها ولم تسؤني .

204 Ibid.

205 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qurʾān, Volume 1*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 463.

206 Ibid.

207 **angels** – in biblical and most ancient non-biblical Jewish and Christian texts, angels are spiritual or divine beings superior to humans in power and knowledge. Angels in the Old Testament are generally viewed as in the service of God, but in later literature some angels are depicted as opponents of God. The Hebrew word *malak* and the Greek word *angelos* are the biblical terms commonly translated as *angel*. Both of these words are thought to

mean *messenger*, and the terms themselves provide no clue as to whether a divine or human messenger is intended. Only in Latin (*angelus*) and subsequent Western languages is the word *angel*, in its biblical usage, taken for granted as referring to divine beings.

Sometimes in the biblical text uncertainty exists about whether a figure is human or superhuman (compare Genesis, 32:24–25 with 32:30; see Joshua, 5:13–14) and about whether God or a messenger is involved (compare Genesis, 16:7 with 16:13; and Exodus, 3:2 with 3:4). The Old Testament speaks of the *angel of Yahweh* (Genesis, 16:7 and frequently elsewhere) although this phrase is also used to refer to humans (Haggai, 1:13; Malachi, 2:7). Divine beings subordinate to God are also called *sons of God* (Genesis, 6:2; Job, 1:6) or *holy ones* (Psalms, 89:7; Job 5:1). *Seraphim* and *cherubim* also appear (Isaiah, 6:1–6; Genesis, 3:24; Ezekiel, 10:1–22), but they presumably were considered, unlike angels, as nonhuman in form.

The general impression one is inclined to receive about angels from the Bible is that just as a king would be surrounded by attendants and subordinates who praise, serve, and carry out orders, so God is surrounded by such a body of heavenly beings — the sons of God, the divine council, or angels — who perform these functions for God. In the earlier portions of the Old Testament, the appearance of angels is reasonably sporadic. Here they function primarily as divine messengers, as protectors and guides for the people (Psalms, 91:11), and as agitators of the people's enemies in battle (Psalms, 35:5–6). In specific instances, angels are shown preventing Abraham from offering his son Isaac (☩) as a sacrifice (in the Judeo-Christian version of history; Genesis, 22:11–12), reassuring Jacob (☩) in a dream (Genesis, 31:11), encountering Moses (☩) in the burning bush (Exodus, 3:2), announcing the births of Ishmael (☩) and Samson (Genesis, 16:11; Judges, 13:3–5), leading the Hebrews in the wilderness and then into the Promised Land (Exodus, 14:19, 23:20–23, 33:2), directing the actions of Balaam (Numbers, 22:22–35), feeding Elijah in the wilderness (1 Kings, 19:5), and creating disaster for the Assyrians attacking Jerusalem (2 Kings, 19:35; Isaiah, 37:36).

In the later Old Testament, noticeable shifts appear, not only in the nature and roles of angels, but also in the frequency and importance of their appearance. They reveal secrets about the future, interpret dreams and visions, and aid in clarifying scripture (Ezekiel, 40:3; Zechariah, chapters 1–14; and Daniel, chapters 7–12). Unlike the role and power ascribed to him in the Book of Job, Satan, a “son of God,” becomes more of an anti-God power (Zechariah, 3:1–2; 1 Chronicles, 21:1). As in the examples of Gabriel and Michael (☩), angels are also known to have proper names (Daniel, 8:16, 9:21, 10:13, 10:21, 12:1).

Between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the following developments reflected in the Pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls occurred in Jewish angelology:

1. angels become associated with various phenomena such as stars, the seasons, and so forth, and are involved in the governance of the world;
2. names for many angels appear;
3. evil angelic powers hostile to God appear and are named;
4. angels are often pictured in a hierarchy, thus giving rise to the concept of archangels;
5. angelic armies, both good and bad, are mentioned;
6. angels function as intercessors and carry humans' prayers to the Divine;
7. different angels are associated with different nations (already reflected in the Book of Daniel);
8. angels are present in worship (1 Corinthians, 11:10);
9. the guardian role of angels becomes more important (Acts, 12:15);
10. stories are told in which angels play special roles (Book of Tobit); and
11. angels are considered to have been the mediators of the Law at Mount Sinai (Acts, 7:53; Galatians, 3:19).

The New Testament reflects the angelology of the world of its day. Angels as messengers announce the births of John the Baptist and Jesus (ﷺ) to the people (Luke, 1:11–20, 2:8–15, Matthew, 1:18–25); they offer assurance and protection (Matthew, 1:18–25, 2:13; Acts, 12:6–9); they serve Jesus (ﷺ) in the wilderness and in the ordeal before the “crucifixion” (Matthew, 4:11; Mark, 1:12; Luke 22:43); and they appear at the Holy Sepulcher (Matthew, 28:1–7; Mark 16:5–7; Luke 24:4). Angels are said to surround the throne of God, and in the Book of Revelation, where the primary actions are set in heaven, angels play dominant roles in world history and the events of the end of days. Some biblical passages allude to the primeval rebellion of angelic powers (Jude, chapter 6). Angels are assigned roles in the world (Romans, 8:38; Acts 5:19; Galatians, 4:3; Colossians, 2:8; Ephesians, 3:10) but are considered by Christians inferior to Jesus, the son (Hebrews, 1:4–13). While angels are said to appear at the final judgment (Matthew, 13:39–43, 24:29–31; Mark, 13:24–27), St. Paul declares that Christians shall judge the angels (1 Corinthians, 6:3).

208 Transmitted by Umm al-Mu'minin 'Ā'ishah and recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Imam Muslim.

عن عائشة قالت قال رسول الله -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « خلقت الملائكة من نور وخلق الجن من مارح من نار وخلق آدم ما وصف لكم ».

209 Recorded in the Sunans of Imams al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nisā'ī, Ibn Mājah, and Abū Dawūd.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوما ( يا عائش هذا جبريل يقرئك السلام ) . فقلت وعليه السلام ورحمة الله وبركاته ترى ما لا أرى

210 This hadith is narrated by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and can be found in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs and several books of Hadith.

عمر بن الخطاب قال بينما نحن عند رسول الله -صلى الله عليه وسلم- ذات يوم إذ طلع علينا رجل شديد بياض الثياب شديد سواد الشعر لا يرى عليه أثر السفر ولا يعرفه منا أحد حتى جلس إلى النبي -صلى الله عليه وسلم- فأسند ركبتيه إلى ركبتيه ووضع كفيه على فخذيه وقال يا محمد أخبرني عن الإسلام. فقال رسول الله -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « الإسلام أن تشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله وتقيم الصلاة وتؤتي الزكاة وتصوم رمضان وتحج البيت إن استطعت إليه سبيلا. قال صدقت. قال فعجبنا له يسأله ويصدق. قال فأخبرني عن الإيمان. قال « أن تؤمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله واليوم الآخر وتؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره ». قال صدقت. قال فأخبرني عن الإحسان. قال « أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك ». قال فأخبرني عن السابعة. قال « ما السائل عنها بأعلم من السائل ». قال فأخبرني عن أمارتها. قال « أن تلد الأمة ربتها وأن ترى الحفاة العراة العالة رعاء الشاء يتطاولون في البنيان ». قال ثم انطلق فلبثت مليا ثم قال لي « يا عمر أتدرى من السائل ». قلت لله ورسوله أعلم. قال « فإنه جبريل أتاكم يعلمكم دينكم ».

211 *al-khilāfah al-rāshidah* – often translated as the *Rightly-Guided Caliphs*.

This is typically identified by Sunnī historians as the short period of legitimate representative Islamic rule following the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) and preceding the first age of repressive, autocratic, and hereditary kings, started by the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. Lasting 30 years, it comprised the administrations, in order, of Abū Bakr (10–12AH), 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (12–22AH), 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (22–34AH), 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (34–39AH), and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, the Prophet's (ﷺ) grandson (40AH). There is some hesitation among these historians about including al-Ḥasan in this group because of the short time he ruled — about six months. However, because of a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ), which indicates that this period would last for 30 years, it appears that he rightfully belongs with the others that preceded him. There is also an opinion held by another group of historians that includes 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (ruled from 98–101AH), the eighth Umayyad head of state and the great-grandson of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, in this category because he ruled justly in line with the standard and precedent of the Prophet (ﷺ). He is often referred to as the fifth of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs.

212 **United States Central Command (USCENTCOM)** – established officially in 1983, it represents the theater level projection of American military power in the Islamic East. It is responsible for deploying troops, armaments, and supporting personnel; for coordinating all preparations for military engagements; for developing all strategies related to invasion, occupation, and counterinsurgency operations; and for establishing the political frameworks that foster the long-term procurement of US geo-political and economic interests. CENTCOM's geographic scope and formal area of responsibility extends to 20 countries: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan,



Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uzbekistan, and Yemen; international waters included are the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and western portions of the Indian Ocean. Ironically, Israel being in the same region and surrounded by CENTCOM countries, is not under the jurisdiction of CENTCOM; it remains under the European Command (EUCOM) because, according to many in the US Department of Defense, "...it is more politically, militarily and culturally aligned with Europe." Currently CENTCOM is deploying the bulk of its forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, most of whom are served from US military bases in the occupied countries as well as other bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Pakistan, and Central Asia. In the not-too-distant past, CENTCOM had troops and bases in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, but "officially" as of 2009, there were no substantial forces in those countries. Just as the US officially admits to having no knowledge of any nuclear weapons states in the Middle East, it admits to having no military bases in Saudi Arabia. For those who know that Israel has at least 300 nuclear bombs, they also know that the US has at least 16 military bases (officially run by the Saudis with tens of thousands of US military "advisors") in Saudi Arabia.

**Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS)** – an early warning, all-weather surveillance, command, control, and communications mechanism developed for the US armed forces to detect all enemy movements on land and hostile aircraft. Distinguished by the 30-foot radar disk fastened to the fuselage



of a Boeing 707 airplane and used at very high altitude, it was initially put into service for the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Saudi Arabia, and NATO air defense forces. By 1992, when production of the specialized aircraft was halted, 68 had been built. Since then, the system has received design upgrades as well as radar system improvements. In fact, now the system, under the more general name, Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) system, is employed by many other countries and has been fitted onto many types of aircraft.

This is one of the advanced technologies Israel mysteriously "acquired" from the United States and now competes with the US in selling the same — under the trade name IAI Phalcon — to India, Chile, and a host of other countries. The IAI Phalcon is now considered by military experts to be the most advanced AEW&C system in service, outperforming the older AWACS by several orders of magnitude and providing greater operational flexibility.

Source for Khalid ibn Sultan quote on p. 36:

Peter Baker, *Saudis Showcase Cooperation At Air Base With Key Mission; U.S. Hopes to Use Command Post in Event of Iraq Conflict*. (Washington, DC: Washington Post, News (A) section, November 21, 2002), p. A34.

213 Ibid.

214 Outside the farm town of al-Kharj, Prince Sultan Air Base sprawls over 230 square miles. The main gate is 12 miles from the central administrative building. The American military forces, who apparently “pulled out” at the end of 2003, lived in their own separate part of the military base along with stores, a baseball diamond, swimming pool, internet cafe, and an ice cream shop. The Saudi section is speckled with “mosques.” How offensive can these Saudi *anti-shūrā* rulers be? Their hypocrisy makes ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy look like a saint. In the Arabic language they portray themselves as the custodians of the two sanctuaries in Makkah and Madinah, while to their Anglo-American superiors they have offered among other things the Prince Sultan Air Base and a state-of-the-art Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC), not to mention trillions of dollars to prop up the US economy. Located in an anonymous, low-slung building in the middle of the base, the CAOC can process extraordinary volumes of data, from satellite imagery to reconnaissance from surveillance planes to reports from the field, at the same time that it tracks hundreds of aircraft operating across the region (source: Peter Baker in the *Washington Post*, see endnote 212 above).

215 Narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and recorded by al-Dārquṭnī.

لما روى الدارقطني بإسناد صحيح عن أنس أنه قال: «ما زال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقنت في صلاة الغداة حتى فارق الدنيا» .

216 Narrated by Ibn ‘Umar and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Hanbal and al-Bukhārī.

وروى أحمد والبخاري عن ابن عمر قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: اللهم العن فلانا. اللهم العن الحارث بن هشام. اللهم العن سهيل بن عمرو. اللهم العن صفوان بن أمية. فنزلت الآية: ليس لك من الأمر شيء إلى آخرها. فتيب عليهم كلهم.

217 **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** – specialized agency of the United Nations established by the Bretton Woods Monetary and Financial Conference of 1944 to crusade for international monetary exchanges. The major public objectives of the Fund include: (1) promotion of exchange stability; (2) establishment of a worldwide multilateral payments system; and (3) provision of monetary reserves to “help” member nations overcome short-run disequi-

libria in their balances of payments. By the 1980s, 146 members had joined the Fund and had subscribed to quotas totaling over \$25 billion. Voting power in the IMF is determined by the size of a member's "contribution," with the United States casting about one-fourth of the total. The industrial nations function as a caucus (Group of 30) to reach decisions in the IMF to "defend" currency values and to promote international liquidity.



The creation of the IMF was aimed at preventing a return to the uncontrollable financial conditions of the 1930s decade (during the Great Depression in the US), with its wildly fluctuating exchange rates and competitive devaluations. For many years, major exchange depreciations were generally avoided, but because of deteriorating world economic conditions exchange stability has been greatly weakened. The main problems facing the Fund have been the persistent deficit in the balance of payments of most Third World countries. Other problems include the shortage of international reserves at a time when international trade has expanded rapidly, and a dangerously high level of inflation in most countries. Balance of payments financing has involved annual loans of billions of dollars and other currencies to deficit states by the IMF in an effort to avoid a general default on international loans. This type of situation becomes critical because many resource stripped countries must borrow the money from the IMF to make their annual payments to private and public banks and loan agencies on the principal and usury owed on outstanding loans.

**International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** – specialized agency of the United Nations, known informally as the **World Bank**, that makes loans for economic "rehabilitation or development" purposes. The Bank was created by the Bretton Woods Agreement of 1944 to campaign for the growth of world trade and higher standards of living on capitalist terms by making loans when "private capital" is not available. The Bank's chief sources of funds are "capital subscriptions" from member nations and sales of its own bonds to private investors. One-fourth of the initial capital of the Bank was provided by the United States. The Bank operates by making loans to governments or to private companies, although the latter loans must be guaranteed by a government or its fiscal agent. With the one-time exception of what used to be communist states, most countries are members of the Bank. To meet criticism of the Bank's conservative lending policies, the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)** was created in 1956 to invest in private enterprises and, in 1960, the **International Development Association (IDA)** was created as an affiliate of the Bank for the





purpose of offering long-term, "no-interest" loans. The IBRD, the IFC, and the IDA are known collectively as the World Bank.

In the early 1980s, the World Bank Group had made 3,383 loans, amounting to a total of approximately \$85 billion, with IBRD's share amounting to about \$60 billion. In 1980, the Bank made 144 loans at an average usury rate of 8.25%. Loans are made only after careful and detailed studies convince the Bank's Governing Board of the soundness of the ventures. Recently, the World Bank Group in a single year lent more than \$12 billion to developing member countries, with \$4 billion lent on concessional terms to the poorest nations of the Third World. In 1979, the industrial nations agreed to a \$40 billion capital increase for World Bank development lending, with \$8.8 billion to be provided by the United States in the 1980s. Because loan decisions are made by the Board using a system of voting weighted on the basis of contributions to the Bank's capitalization, these decisions are controlled by a small group of Western countries, with the United States possessing about 20% of the total votes of the Bank's members. Terms of loans have varied, with usury rates running close to those in private capital markets, and with payment periods ranging from 10 to 35 years. Loans have been granted for such projects as irrigation, mining, agriculture, transport and communication, and general development.

The Bank has also undertaken a broad technical assistance program to help prepare the ground for useful loans and to help recipients make effective use of loans received. Efforts are also made in granting loans to finance those projects that are most likely to encourage an inflow of private investment capital. Although the Bank has progressively increased the pace of its lending activities, its ability to help developing nation-states meet their capital needs is limited. Increasingly, the World Bank Group has joined in consortium arrangements with a number of other international, national, and private banks to collectively finance major projects. In recent years, many loans have been aimed at increasing the capability of Third World countries to make payments on their massive usury induced loans that have precipitated a world debt crisis. The World Bank works closely with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on these and other major international problems, including holding joint meetings every year.

218 Narrated by 'Uday and recorded by Imams al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Aḥmad ibn Hanbal.

قال عدي سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول ( اتقوا النار ولو بشق تمره فمن لم يجد شق تمره فيكلمه طيبة ) .

219 Narrated by Abū ibn Ka'b and recorded in the hadith collections of al-Ḥākim, al-Ṭabarānī, al-Bukhārī, and Muslim.

روى الحاكم والطبراني عن أبي بن كعب أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: «من سره أن يشرف له البنيان وترفع له الدرجات، فليعف عن ظلمه، ويعط من حرمه، ويصل من قطعه» «1» .

220 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded in the hadith collections of Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī.

كما جاء في السيرة: «والذي نفسي بيده لأمثلن بسبعين منهم» .

221 One barrel of oil is equivalent to approximately 159 liters or 41 gallons.

222 An analysis by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in 2003 estimated that Iraq's foreign debt approached nearly \$400 billion.<sup>a</sup> That would make it more than three times the size of Iraq's current GDP of about \$114 billion. Nearly \$200 billion of Iraq's estimated foreign debt relates to unpaid settlements and unsettled claims arising from Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the subsequent war to dislodge him (the Second Gulf War and Operation Desert Storm).<sup>b</sup> Including accrued *ribā*, Iraq has another \$125 billion in "sovereign external debt," most of which was acquired during the 1980s, when Iraq waged an eight-year war of aggression against Islamic Iran (the First Gulf War).<sup>c</sup> Much of that debt is also owed to Arabian nation-states in the Persian Gulf region, which, at the time, were afraid of the Islamic Revolution under the able leadership of Imam Khomeini. Saddam Hussein expected that these debts would be written off after the war; the fact that they were not contributed to his decision to invade Kuwait. Included in the \$125 billion are debts owed to France and Russia (an estimated \$20 billion), who supplied their Ba'thī surrogates in Baghdad with weapons and other aid.<sup>d</sup> Finally, the CSIS study calculated that Iraq had signed \$57 billion worth of "economic development" contracts with other nations, 90% of which were with Russia for oil exploration and exploitation.

a Frederick D. Barton, Bathsheba N. Crocker (project directors), *A Wiser Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Iraq (Supplement I: Background Information on Iraq's Financial Obligations)*. (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), January 23, 2003).  
[http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/wiserpeace\\_i.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/wiserpeace_i.pdf)

b **Saddam Hussein** (1937–2006) – refer to endnote 21 in Volume 2.

**Second Gulf War** (1990–1991) – refer to endnote 60 in Volume 2.

c **First Gulf War** (1980–1988) – refer to endnote 151 in Volume 3.

**Imam Khomeini** (1902–1989) – refer to endnote 232 in Volume 2.

d **Ba'th Party** – founded in 1943 by secular Syrian intellectuals, the “Christian” **Mīshāl 'Aflaq** (1910–1989) and the “Muslim” **Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Bīṭār** (1912–1980), the party was the first bona fide socialist organization in the Arabian world. Priding itself on an “Arab” brand of socialism, as distinct from European socialism or communism, it sought to counter Western imperialism by calling for Arabian unity under an Arab nationalist program: *waḥdah, ḥurrīyah, ishtirākīyah* (unity, liberty, socialism). In outlining the party’s fundamental approach to political transformation, Dilip Hiro says, “While the official principles of the party rejected the concept of class conflict, it favored land reform; public ownership of natural resources, transport, large-scale industry and financial institutions; trade unions of workers and peasants; the co-option of workers into management; and acceptance of non-exploitative private ownership and inheritance. It stood for a representative and constitutional form of government, and freedom of speech and associations within the bounds of Arab nationalism.”<sup>e</sup> Although the party opened offices in many Arabian countries, it only acquired political power in Syria, where it has been the official ruling party since 1963; and Iraq, where it was the ruling party from 1968 until the US formally deposed Saddam Hussein in 2003 during its occupation of Iraq.



The Ba'th Party began to gain institutional prominence in the middle-1950s. 'Aflaq and **al-Bīṭār** took advantage of the gathering popular political winds blowing against the Syrian military regime of Adīb al-Shīshaklī. Thus, in 1954, the Ba'th Party joined the communists, the Druze, the 'Alawīs, and an assortment of other disgruntled proto-nationalists to overthrow the military government and establish “democratic” rule in Syria. In the ensuing elections, al-Bīṭār was elected deputy of Damascus and later in 1956, under the presidency of Shukrī al-Quwatlī, became the Minister for Foreign Affairs, a post he held until 1958. The Ba'th's success in Syria was mildly infectious during these years, as it won some seats in the Iraqi parliament and established political organizations in Lebanon, Jordan, and Yemen.



But because all those who had previously joined forces in the 1954 coup began to pursue their own individual, often competing, agendas, none of the parties including the Ba'th could assume absolute control over the Syrian government. This was complicated by the fact, that all the parties, being anti-imperialist in nature, favored the Marxist, socialist, top-down, state-sponsored and state-guided approach to reform — meaning that not much attention and resources were devot-

ed to constituency development at the grassroots level with the result that “the people” or the “Arab street” never really warmed up to any party’s platform except for the universal anti-imperialist position adopted by all parties. Thus party politics and issues of governance were restricted to the tight domain of socialist academics, secular intellectuals, and an opportunistic, ideologically agnostic military that was biding its time to see who would emerge as the most powerful; the military would then adopt the ideological positions, the shape, and the color of this group in order to form a government. But the shifting sands of secular intellectual loyalty to a particular party, driven as they are by the lack of fealty to any ideological reference point other than the “natural” self-interest of a major power (in this case, the Soviets), contributed to a high degree of factionalism in all of Syria’s political parties, and the Ba’th was no exception.

For these reasons in order to offset further splintering and maintain ideological purity, because it was a Ba’thist dream come true, and because it was a very popular position, the Ba’th leadership lent its ideological and remaining membership support to the chorus agitating for the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR), a federated union between Egypt and Syria under the leadership of Egyptian president, Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir (most often transliterated as Gamal Abdel Nasser). With the formal creation of the UAR in 1958, in which the major goals of the Ba’th were thought to be achieved, ‘Aflaq and al-Biṭār agreed to dissolve the Ba’th Party in Syria, and ‘Aflaq became the Minister of Guidance in the newly created UAR. But the UAR, for a host of reasons that will form the subject of a future discussion, would not last for more than three years, the end culminating with a military coup in Syria in 1961. In the aftermath of Syria’s secession from the UAR, the Ba’th found itself in shambles as its leadership (‘Aflaq and al-Biṭār) only timidly opposed the secession while its base of radical nationalists, avidly behind Egypt’s Nasser, thoroughly rejected it.

As ‘Aflaq and al-Biṭār became increasingly marginalized, with their teachings being adopted in name only by military units favoring monopolistic control of the political process, the party split into two rivals. The two opposing factions — the *Qutri* (autonomist) ultimately led by Syria’s Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad (the father of Syria’s current president, Bashshār al-Asad), and the *Qawmi* (nationalist) ultimately led by Iraq’s Saddam Hussein — became the only political parties in Syria and Iraq, retaining to the end their bitter animosities against each other and betraying the founding objectives of the party. After 1963, the Ba’th Party in Syria continued to split into several other factions, most notably after the 1967 Six-Day War, after al-Asad refused to give air support to the Palestinians in their fight against the Jordanian army in

1970, and after al-Asad intervened in the Lebanese civil war in 1976 on the side of the Maronite Christians.

In Iraq, the Ba'thists, aided by thousands of non-Ba'thī sympathizers, took control of the government in 1963 after overthrowing 'Abd al-Karīm Qāsim. However in the same year, due to internal bickering and infighting, the Ba'th Party lost control of the government and could not prevent 'Abd al-Salām 'Ārif from seizing power. Again in 1968, this time with the help of non-Ba'thī military officers, the Ba'th overthrew 'Ārif and took control of the government. Not repeating its earlier mistakes in this go-round, the party began to institutionalize party principles into the state representation and legal apparatus, as well as in the society at large. After developing the interim constitution in 1970 the party tightened its grip on the armed forces, police, and intelligence cadres, as well as mechanisms that would launch new members into top government positions. Saddam Hussein was one such member who had earlier been in charge of strengthening the party's militia. The First Gulf War (the Iraq-Iran War, 1980–1988) brought about a fundamental challenge to the stated goals of the Ba'th faction in Iraq. Its socialist dogma was sidelined when in order to increase production, the private sector was encouraged to grow at the expense of the public sector, no doubt based on ideological pressure from the US in return for US-sponsored weapons shipments, battlefield surveillance technology, as well as thousands of military "advisors." And finally the pan-Arabism idea was abandoned in favor of Iraqi nationalism, which was used to motivate citizens to join the war effort.

Given that the two founders, 'Aflaq and al-Biṭār, were both educated at the Sorbonne in the 1930s, the party's platform was inspired by the French political doctrine linking national unity to social equity. 'Aflaq, in particular, considered Ottoman and Western imperialist influence to be equally damaging to the "Arab" national character. Not having the intellectual wherewithal to draw a distinction between the Ottomans and the Europeans is not surprising given the oppressively orientalist educational background of the two founders, and the fact that a significant number of the other founding members were Arabian Christians, minorities (Druze, Ismā'ilīs, 'Alawīs), and nationalist "Sunnīs." This was especially remarkable in the case of al-Biṭār who apparently came from a "family of Islamic scholars." Nonetheless, for the Arabian Christians, a dogmatically nationalist and secularist structure, inspired by the biblical precedent of placing dogma above rationality and of placing kings above accountability, was the most opportune way to evade a universalist Islamic orientation, especially at a time when secular rationalizations for European nationalist postures were largely dominant over any Islamic counter response.

- e Dilip Hiro, *Dictionary of the Middle East*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 40.
- 223 The price for one barrel of the OPEC basket of 12 crudes stood at \$59.66 on 7-14-09 (source: <http://www.opec.org/home/>).
- 224 The information related to the appointments of these individuals to government posts before or after their service in "private" industry can be found in a variety of places, not the least of which are the company websites and listings of cabinet level officers in previous administrations. One such resource on the web is the Internet Public Library, <http://www.ipl.org/div/potus/>.
- 225 Michael Schwartz, *Colonizing Iraq: The Obama Doctrine?* (Washington, DC: truthout.org, July 9, 2009).  
<http://www.truthout.org/070909U>
- 226 When Muslims who keep the company of Allah (ﷻ), and are keenly aware of His power, find themselves in a military and psychological war, they know that if the war turns against them, it may have devastating effects on everyone in society. And sometimes, or rather many times, they cannot overextend ourselves — they have to deal with the immediate danger and forgo their personal petty feelings if they are offended by people who do not know better, as long as these offenses are not capital offenses. And in these situations, the Muslims show how flexible, how tolerant, and how open-minded and accommodating they can be. And Allah (ﷻ) loves those who want to do better. And those who want to do better, in a scriptural society, love Allah (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) shares His power with them as they overcome their human vulnerabilities for Him.
- 227 Muslims who live with Allah (ﷻ) have tender hearts, soaring spirits, and sensitive consciences. Years of living with Allah (ﷻ) leave their warm, soft, and caressing effects on the passions and affections of these God-attached Muslims. In this atmosphere of human immersion in the reality of Allah (ﷻ) and His presence, it does not behoove such a Muslim to burn his bridges with Allah (ﷻ), or to turn away from Him, just because he may have slipped or lapsed, provided that the missteps and misdeeds do not become patterns of perverse behavior.
- If a child or minor does something wrong and knows that the father has nothing but a stick and harsh punishment awaiting him, that child would prefer to avoid, and even abandon, a father who rules by a stick and not by an "emotional attachment." If this child senses that his father cares for him even when he makes mistakes, shows him love even when he acts badly, and offers him understanding and compassion even when there is little to excuse

his errant behavior, and knows his father wants to help, he will approach his father, confess to his fault, and promise not to do it again — and all concerned will be pleased with this outcome.

Human beings carry within them through their lifetimes childish moments or childish acts that beg for passionate love and warmheartedness. Allah (ﷻ) responds to this human demeanor positively and passionately. He knows man will stumble and He also knows man is able to get up again. He knows beside those moments of deviation that interrupt a person’s life there are days and years of struggle, constructive deeds, and goodwill. These days and years of meaning to do good while aware of the presence of Allah (ﷻ) need not be jeopardized by moments of regression, especially when there is an expressed human will and determination not to do it again.

228 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1411AH), p. 99.

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: «لو خيرت بين الهزيمة والنصر يوم أحد لاخترت الهزيمة».

229 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī ‘Awfī and recorded in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs.

قد ثبت في الصحيحين: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: «لا تتمنوا لقاء العدو. وسلوا الله العافية. فإذا لقيتموهم فاصبروا. واعلموا أن الجنة تحت ظلال السيوف».

230 Practically speaking there are governments, militaries, international structures, legal systems, and knowledge paradigms that stand as impediments to the words of Allah (ﷻ), **“Go into [countries of] the earth and observe what happened in the end to those who lied [about Allah]” (3:137)**. Today, it is very difficult for students of scripture to travel to the lands of ancient civilizations or countries of medieval empires to study the social processes that were responsible for the collapse of historic civilizations and imperial governments. In some countries there are academic and “legal” restrictions on access to their “national archives.” In other countries some of these issues are considered “classified information” or “state secrets” and thus are not available to a Muslim who wants to obey Allah (ﷻ), or to an Islamic government that wants to implement this *āyah* and make it a basis of academic and sociological inquiry. Thus if committed Muslims desire to look into “state protected information” relevant to the social laws (*sunan*) at work in different political and economic blocs in this world, they will run into opposition from all the forces and institutions that defend such arbitrary governments and their unjustifiable policies.

231 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqidah wa-al-Shari'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 3. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 97, (originally narrated by Rāshid ibn Sa'd).

فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: أهكذا يفعل برسولك؟ فأنزل الله تعالى: إن يبسسكم قرح الآية «أ» .

232 Understood in secular *kāfir* terms, war is a military conflict between two states, or, in the case of civil war, between different groups within a state. International war is subject to international law, and wars can be either lawful or unlawful. There have been a series of treaties since the 18th century covering the conduct of war, largely designed to prevent “unnecessary suffering” and action that has no military advantage. The emergence of more overtly ideological wars and modern weapons have made it more difficult to regulate the conduct of war; for example, it is far more difficult now to protect civilians from aerial bombardment. Today the main source of international law on war or the use of force is the United Nations Charter, notably Article 2(4), “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”<sup>a</sup>

Distinctions are also now drawn between conventional warfare, which does not involve the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and nuclear warfare, chemical warfare, and biological warfare.<sup>b</sup> Guerrilla warfare, meanwhile, is conducted by generally non-regimented forces, often avoiding direct engagement with the state or its foreign allies, to discredit a state’s control of civic society prior to a potential seizure of power.

a Source: Charter of the United Nations

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

b Nuclear weapons are WMDs employing the energy-liberating nuclear phenomena of fission for their effects. According to their size and the means of delivery, they may be classified as tactical short-range weapons for use against enemy battlefield forces; theater medium range weapons for use against deep military targets; and strategic long-range weapons for use against enemy cities and command centers.

The use of deadly or disabling substances in warfare was forbidden by a declaration of the Hague Conference in 1899, but one of the signatories, Germany, was the first to use such weapons, as mainstream history has it, the first attack being made against British troops at Ypres in April 1915. Since 1918 chemical weapons have been used in many conflicts, but not on European battlefields, although the Germans manufactured large quantities of deadly nerve gases during World War II. Such



weapons are not forbidden by secular treaty, and large quantities were stockpiled by the USA and the former Soviet Union. Other agents of chemical warfare include non-lethal harassing and incapacitating agents, hallucinogenic substances, and herbicides.

Bacteriological warfare uses naturally-occurring micro-organisms and toxins, which are poisonous chemicals derived from natural sources, as weapons of war. The manufacture and stockpiling of such agents is forbidden by a 1972 UN Convention, although research is allowed to continue. Iraq's bio-weapons program, cited by President George W. Bush as a reason for the US invasion of Iraq, got its start 20 years earlier with help from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (source: <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/1001-06.htm>).

233 Dr. 'Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsah fi al-Sirah (5th edition)*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 1401AH), p. 187, (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidī, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Balādhurī, Ibn al-Athīr, and Ibn Kathīr).

Details of the Battle of Uḥūd in particular and the Prophet's (ﷺ) Sirah in general are available in a large number of classical sources. The *mufassir* chose to refer to the following sources, which will be cited extensively in future volumes of this *tafsir*, as pertinent facts from the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) are needed to make important points.

1. Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mālik **ibn Hishām**, *Sirah ibn Hishām*.
2. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr **al-Ṭabarī**, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, *Tafsir al-Ṭabarī*, and *Kitāb al-Umam wa-al-Mulūk*.
3. Muḥammad **ibn Sa'd** ibn Māni' al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*.
4. Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ibn Wāqid al-Aslamī (commonly referred to as **al-Wāqidī**), *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*.
5. Aḥmad ibn Yahyā ibn Jābir **al-Balādhurī**, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* and *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān*.
6. Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī **al-Mas'ūdī**, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawāhir*.
7. 'Alī 'Izz al-Dīn **ibn al-Athīr** al-Jazarī, *Al-Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh* and *Asad al-Ghābah fi Ma'rifaḥ al-Ṣaḥābah*.
8. Abū al-Fida' 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'il ibn 'Umar **ibn Kathīr** al-Qurayshī al-Buṣrawī, *Tafsir ibn Kathīr* and *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah*.
9. Abū Muḥammad 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa'd **ibn Ḥazm**, *Al-Milal wa-al-Niḥal* and *Jawāmi' al-Sirah*.
10. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad **al-Maqdisī**, *Kitāb al-Bad' wa-al-Tārīkh*.

234 Ibid., p. 188, (originally cited by al-Wāqidī).

235 **Najd** – the central region in what is called nowadays the nation-state of Saudi Arabia (refer to endnote 1 of Volume 4 for a map). The estimated population is around 4 million. It is a chiefly rocky plateau with mountains to the west and desert to the east, north, and south; it also contains a string of oases. Najd was politically fragmented until 1745, when it became the center of the Wahhābī movement. More recently, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Āl Sa‘ūd (commonly referred to as Abdul Aziz ibn Saud) conquered the region from the Ottoman Turks in 1902 with the military and political aid of the British Empire. Since then it has been the geographical and ideological center of the Saudi nation-state. After “absorbing” the Hijāz and some other surrounding provinces, it was finally dubbed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, and the Najdī capital of Riyadh became its national seat of power. Now officially called the Central region, it consists of Ḥā’il, al-Qaṣīm, and Riyadh provinces.

236 Dr. ‘Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsah fi al-Sirah (5th edition)*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu’assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1401AH), p. 189.

237 Muḥammad Abū Zuhrah, *Khātam al-Nabiyīn, Volume 2*. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1401AH), p. 696.

238 Dr. ‘Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsah fi al-Sirah (5th edition)*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu’assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1401AH), p. 189–190, (originally cited by al-Wāqidi and by al-Ṭabarī under the title *Buṭūlāt Uḥūd: The Heroics of Uḥūd*).

239 Dr. ‘Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsah fi al-Sirah (5th edition)*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu’assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1401AH), p. 190, (originally narrated by Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri and Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh, and recorded by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī).

ما ينبغي لنبي لبس لامته أن يضعها حتى يحكم الله بينه وبين عدوه .

240 Muḥammad Abū Zuhrah, *Khātam al-Nabiyīn, Volume 2*. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1401AH), p. 697.

241 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Ḥakīm (better known as Tafsīr al-Manār), Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Ma’rifah, 1414AH), p. 99, (located in the Ṣaḥīḥs of Imams al-Bukhārī and Muslim).

242 Muḥammad Abū Zuhrah, *Khātam al-Nabiyīn, Volume 2*. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1401AH), p. 703.

إحموا لنا ظهورنا إننا نخاف أن يجيئوا من ورائنا والزموا أمانكم لا تبرحوا منها وإن رأيتمونا نقتل فلا تعينونا ولا تدفعوا عنا وإنما عليكم أن ترشقوا خيلهم بالنبل فإن الخيل لا تقدم على النبل.

- 243 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm (better known as Tafsīr al-Manār)*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Ma'rifaḥ, 1414AH), p. 99–100, (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidi, and al-Balādhurī).
- 244 Dr. 'Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsaḥ fi al-Siraḥ (5th ed.)*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1401AH), p. 191, (originally cited by al-Ṭabarī and al-Wāqidi)
- 245 Ibid., p. 192, (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidi, and al-Balādhurī).
- 246 Ibid., p. 193, (originally cited by al-Wāqidi and al-Balādhurī).
- 247 Ibid., p. 194, (originally cited by al-Wāqidi).
- 248 Ibid., (originally narrated by Anas ibn Mālik and recorded by Ibn Mājah, and then cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidi, and al-Balādhurī).
- لما كان يوم أحد كسرت رابعة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وشج فجعل الدم يسيل على وجهه وجعل يمسح الدم عن وجهه ويقول كيف يفلح قوم خضبوا وجه نبيهم بالدم وهو يدعوهم إلى الله فأنزله الله عز وجل (ليس لك من الأمر شيء أو يتوب عليهم أو يعذبهم فإنهم ظالمون).
- 249 Muḥammad Abū Zuhraḥ, *Khātam al-Nabiyīn*, Volume 2. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1401AH), p. 711–712, (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidi, and al-Balādhurī).
- 250 Dr. 'Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsaḥ fi al-Siraḥ (5th ed.)*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1401AH), p. 196, (originally cited by al-Wāqidi).
- 251 Ibid., (originally cited by al-Balādhurī).
- 252 Muḥammad Abū Zuhraḥ, *Khātam al-Nabiyīn*, Volume 2. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1401AH), p. 712, (originally narrated by Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Sa'īdī and recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Imam al-Bukhārī).
- 253 Muḥammad Abū Zuhraḥ, *Khātam al-Nabiyīn*, Volume 2. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1401AH), p. 713.

One minor detail that often goes unnoticed about Uḥud is the fact that some Makkan women were also fighting against the Muslims. Some even disguised themselves as men. It is related that Abū Dujānah, a Muslim war-

rior at Uḥud who for a time fought using the Prophet's (ﷺ) sword, came across a woman whom he suspected of being Hind, Abū Sufyān's wife. Abū Dujānaḥ had her within the reach of his sword but refused to strike her with the Prophet's (ﷺ) sword although she was an enemy. The *mushriks* and *kāfirs* always make a fuss about Muslim men mistreating women; how do they explain an event like this? They cannot; so they ignore it.

Compare how the committed Muslims conducted themselves in war with the conduct of the *kāfirs*. Due to his chivalry and dignity, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib would not strike an enemy who intentionally exposed his private parts.

254 Dr. 'Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsaḥ fi al-Siraḥ (15th edition)*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1422AH), p. 164, (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidi, and al-Balādhuri)

**Hubal** – the prominent figurine that stood over the niche of the Ka'bah. This idol was destroyed by Muhammad (ﷺ) when Makkah was liberated.

255 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and cited in the histories recorded by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidi, and al-Balādhuri.

قم يا عمر فأجبه فقل : الله أعلى وأجل . لا سواء . قتلانا في الجنة وقتلاككم في النار . فقال له أبو سفيان : هلم إلي يا عمر . فقال رسول الله لعمر : ائته فانظر ما شأنه . فجاءه . فقال له أبو سفيان : أنشدك الله يا عمر أقتلنا محمدا ؟ فقال عمر : اللهم لا . وإنه ليسمع كلامك الآن . قال : أنت عندي أصدق من ابن قميئة - وهو الذي زعم أنه قتل النبي - . ثم نادى أبو سفيان : إنه قد كان في قتلاككم مثله . والله ما رضيت ولا سخطت ما نهيت ولا أمرت.

256 Dr. 'Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsaḥ fi al-Siraḥ (15th edition)*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1422AH), p. 164, (originally cited by Ibn Kathīr and in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī).

257 Ibid., (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidi, and al-Balādhuri).

258 Ibid., (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Wāqidi).

259 Ibid., (located originally in Imam al-Bukhārī's *Kitāb al-Tajrīd*).

260 Ibid., p. 165, (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Wāqidi).

261 Ibid.

262 Ibid., p. 166, (originally cited by al-Balādhuri).

263 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn Tha'labāḥ ibn Ṣaghīr and recorded by Ibn Hishām,

al-Ṭabarī, and al-Wāqidi.

أنا شهيد على هؤلاء . أنه ما من جريح يجرح في الله إلا ويبعثه الله يوم القيامة يدمى جرحه . اللون لون دم .  
والريح ريح مسك .

264 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ṣilāl al-Qur'ān*, Volume 1. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 466.

265 Muḥammad Abū Zuhraḥ, *Khātam al-Nabiyyin*, Volume 2. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1401AH), p. 713.

266 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ṣilāl al-Qur'ān*, Volume 1. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 466.

لن أصاب بمثلك أبدا . ما وقفت قط موقفا أعيظ إلي من هذا .

267 Muḥammad Abū Zuhraḥ, *Khātam al-Nabiyyin*, Volume 2. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1401AH), p. 719.

268 Ibid., p. 720.

269 Dr. 'Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsaḥ fī al-Siraḥ* (15th edition). (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1422AH), p. 167, (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd, al-Wāqidi, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Balādhurī, Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn al-Athīr, and Ibn Kathīr).

The Uḥud debacle was a necessary and rather bitter pill for the Muslims to swallow. The Muslims were taught a valuable lesson by Allah (ﷻ) as they found themselves on the receiving end of frustration. They had earlier achieved a marvellous victory at Badr. The experience at Uḥud was an unavoidable corrective measure to ensure they did not get the impression that victory was guaranteed just because they were Muslims. Had this happened, they would not perform in the future as was required of them. If the Muslims would have won strings of consecutive victories, there would have been many people who would have opportunistically jumped on the Islamic bandwagon, looking for quick successes and easy victories. The Muslims needed a shake-up to sort out the core of committed Muslims, who were willing to go all the way to death to stand for their convictions and principles, from the "Muslims" who wanted to enjoy the benefits of an ascending Islamic power base but were not willing to pay for it with their sweat and blood.

270 Dr. 'Imād al-Dīn Khalīl, *Dirāsaḥ fī al-Siraḥ* (15th edition). (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasaḥ al-Risālah, 1422AH), p. 170–171, (originally cited by Ibn

Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa’d, al-Wāqidī, Ibn Ḥazm, al-Maqdisī, and Ibn Kathīr).

271 Ibid., p. 171.

272 Ibid., p. 172–173, (originally cited by Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa’d, al-Wāqidī, al-Mas’ūdī, and al-Balādhurī).

273 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1411AH), p. 111, (originally cited in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*).

274 Speaking about the Prophet’s (ﷺ) death, his burial was postponed when everyone at that time knew that burials should be expedited! He died on the morning of Yawn al-Ithnayn (Monday) and was finally buried on the next day, Yawn al-Thulāthā’ (Tuesday). So a legitimate question arises, why was the Prophet’s (ﷺ) burial delayed? The short and quick answers are,

1. the Muslims around him were confused: some of them accepted the fact that Muhammad (ﷺ) had died while others did not;
2. the Muslims did not know where to bury him until Abū Bakr said that a prophet is buried in the place where he dies;<sup>a</sup> and
3. there was a polarization of opinions between the Muhājirūn, the Anṣār, and others about who would be the Prophet’s (ﷺ) political heir — that is, who shall have the *bay‘ah* (allegiance) of the Muslims — until popular consensus placed Abū Bakr in that position.

After resolving these issues, the Muslims set upon burying his immaculate body after washing him and placing him in his burial cloth. The companions finished preparing him for burial the day after he passed away. He lay in state on the bed in his home, a place where they could offer their *janāzah* prayers individually. Then the people began entering to offer their final respects and prayers. After the men were done, the women took their turns, and then the young children. To the best of our knowledge no one led the *janāzah* prayers for the Prophet (ﷺ).<sup>b</sup>

a Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1411AH), p. 116, (originally recorded by Ibn Mājah and Imam Mālik in his *al-Muwatta‘a*’).

b Ibid., p. 116, (originally recorded by Ibn Mājah via ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās).

275 Narrated by Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and recorded in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs.

اللهم اغفر لي خطيئتي وجهلي . وإسرافي في أمري . وما أنت أعلم به مني . اللهم اغفر لي هزلي وجدلي وخطاياي وعمدي . وكل ذلك عندي

276 **Salman Ahmed Rushdie** (1947–present) – Indian-born writer who gained British citizenship. His novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), offended many Muslims precisely because it cast aspersions on the Prophet (ﷺ). The title is erroneously said to refer to verses deleted from the Qur'an by the Prophet (ﷺ). In 1989, Imam Khomeini called for the elimination of this offender, especially in view of the fact that Rushdie's book was being used as a political tool and cultural instrument within a wider Western assault on political Islam and ideological Muslims. It was in this aftermath that the Muslims were visited with Western atrocities and genocidal mania in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and other regions. Rushdie was the first shot in a war that began with a cultural assault (*The Satanic Verses*) and ended up with carnage, pogroms, and mayhem.



Rushdie was born in Bombay and later lived in Pakistan before moving to the United Kingdom. His earlier novels in the magic-realist style include *Midnight's Children* (1981), which deals with India from the date of independence and won the Booker Prize; and *Shame* (1983), set in an imaginary parallel in Pakistan. The furor caused by the publication of *The Satanic Verses* led to the withdrawal of British diplomats from Iran. On the same note, in 1966 when Sayyid Quṭb was executed by the Egyptian government, no Western diplomats were withdrawn from Egypt, which goes to prove that Rushdie enjoyed Western patronage for his filthy words about the Scripture and the Prophet (ﷺ). In India and elsewhere innocent people were killed in demonstrations against the book and Rushdie was forced to go into hiding. Even as he spends much of his hiding time in the United States, he is still publishing; among such trivia is his *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, a children's book (1990).

277 Allah (ﷻ) wants strong Muslims who will live and die for their Islamic principles. He does not want spineless Muslims who are happy to cave in to the first alternative offer that comes their way. Allah (ﷻ) wants Muslims who live by and for their principles and tenets, not Muslims who will negotiate away their convictions and commitments for some political or economic trade-off. Allah (ﷻ) wants Muslims who will sacrifice blood and life for Him and His Prophet (ﷺ), not Muslims who are willing to sacrifice Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) for their selfish interests or their worldly gains.

278 **Al-Qaeda** – refer to endnote 148 in Volume 4.

**Taliban** – a Wahhābi-inspired Afghan movement (literally, the word *Taliban* means *students*) that emerged in 1994 and officially formed the government of Afghanistan in 1996, renaming the country as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which was officially recognized by only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In order to better understand the group and its origins, some oft-forgotten features of Afghan history — especially the involvement of hypocritical superpowers, their local and regional proxies, and their foreign policy interests over the last 35 years — need to be reviewed. The people that inhabit the area known as Afghanistan consist ethnically of Pashtuns (52%), Tajiks (21%), Hazaras (19%), and Uzbeks (5%); somewhere between 15% and 30% are Shī'īs (mostly the Hazaras and the Tajiks) and the rest are Sunnīs. Afghanistan unofficially emerged as a buffer state between the Russian and the British empires in the 19th century, though it was never colonized like the other Muslim countries. The country, one of the poorest in the world (life expectancy is only 43 years), has been in a state of perpetual war, either civil or from foreign invaders, since 1979. The combination of Soviet (1979–1989) and US (2001–present) military occupations has resulted in some two million dead, nearly all civilians; the terrain still being pockmarked with 10 million land mines, which claim as many as 90 casualties/month, mostly playing children; and up to 500,000 of the war's orphans being maimed for life.

During the post-WWII Cold War between the USA and the USSR, Afghanistan became a geo-strategic chess piece to be manipulated by both superpowers, for the purpose of securing safe passage for pipelines that would transport oil from the Caspian Sea Basin and Central Asia to the Indian Ocean, from where it would be shipped to the rest of the world. Responding to rising Soviet influence in the limited Afghan central government, the United States CIA started an agitation campaign even before June 1979 (which date they only now officially admit to) by arming the indigenous resistance — the “*mujāhidīn*” who were opposing brutal Soviet-influenced land reforms — with Chinese-made weapons. The Chinese government was secretly rewarded very handsomely, to the tune of several hundred million, perhaps billions of, dollars (by the way, this infusion of cash coupled with China tacitly joining the US side in the Cold War against the Soviets led to the relaxing of trade barriers that ultimately started the “opening-up” of China as a cheap manufacturing platform for Western multinational corporations in the early 1980s, leading 30 years later to China becoming a global economic power). As the resistance quickly spread to all of Afghanistan's 29 provinces, the Soviet-led government responded with severe repression, executing and torturing thousands; this led even more ordinary people to join the *mujāhidīn*. When the central government failed to adequately con-



trol the rapidly deteriorating situation, the Soviet Union formally sent in 80,000 troops to occupy Afghanistan in December of 1979, placing its own man from Moscow, Babrak Karmal, in charge of the new military regime.

Demonstrating once again the depraved duplicity of American politics, then US President Jimmy Carter, who had earlier in July 1979 signed an executive order to provide military aid to the *mujāhidīn* and destabilize the pro-Soviet government, brazenly used the opportunity to castigate the expected Soviet invasion as a threat to vital US interests, and to increase US military expenditures on the anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, put it this way,

And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention... We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would... That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap... The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter, "We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War."<sup>a</sup>

In rationalizing how US support for the *mujāhidīn* would ultimately lead to the dissolution of the USSR, guaranteeing a US victory in the Cold War and sacrificing perhaps hundreds of thousands of Afghan lives in the process, Brzezinski further stated, "What was more important in the world view of history? A few stirred-up Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War."<sup>a</sup>

Soon after the Soviet invasion, US executives scoured the earth looking for Soviet-style arms, materiel, and financial support to equip the resistance. Of course, after making a public show of saying that the US expects the principle of nonintervention to be respected by all parties in the area, including the Soviet Union, the US could not openly give any of its own weapons to the *mujāhidīn*. The CIA came in to coordinate nearly all the activities of the resistance, inside (through the agency of the ISI, the Pakistani secret intelligence service) and outside (mostly through the agency of the Saudis) of Afghanistan. And so, the Chinese agreed to send weapons and military advisers; Anwar al-Sādāt, the US-backed Egyptian strongman, dispatched \$15 million worth of military hardware transported by US airplanes; a number of other countries including Israel, Poland, and Iran agreed to provide their own weapons and military training; the Saudis in addition to giving billions of dollars every year, agreed to recruit "anti-communist" Muslims from all over the Arab and Muslim world; and finally the Pakistanis, under the orders of another regional American proxy, President Zia ul-Haq, agreed to recruit *mujāhidīn* from the three million Afghan refugees in

Pakistan, to set up military staging areas in the north of Pakistan for training the new fighters, and to open thousands of “*madrāsahs*” bordering Afghanistan to ideologically indoctrinate the orphans of the war along with the running flow of foreign fighters, all of whom basically had spent very little time in Afghanistan, into Saudi-style Wahhābism.

Even though the *mujāhidīn* inside Afghanistan consisted of several factions, the US deliberately chose to extend support to the most brutal and sectarian ones, ostensibly to hurt the Russians with such macabre atrocity as to scare them into withdrawing; unfortunately for the poor Afghan civilians, the Russians responded with the same level of grotesquerie. As a result, the largest share of US-ascertained arms, training, and capital went to Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, who first acquired notoriety for giving his militias license to throw acid in the faces of women who did not wear the burka. US CIA and State Department officials themselves characterized Hikmatyar as “a particularly fanatical fundamentalist and woman-hater; scary, vicious; a fascist; definite dictatorship material.”<sup>b</sup> (Hikmatyar, after disappearing for many years, has once again resurfaced as the US, sensing that it will soon lose the war just like the USSR, is looking for “good” Taliban to form a coalition government with the Karzai drug lords who now preside over the central government in Kabul).

In the beginning, from 1980–1984, the US annually provided 10,000 pounds of arms and munitions — assault rifles, grenade launchers, mines, and light anti-aircraft weapons — to the *mujāhidīn*, purchased mostly from the Chinese. Starting in 1985 during Ronald Reagan’s second term as US president, however, shedding all pretense of non-intervention, the US dramatically escalated the total to 65,000 pounds/year with high-technology US arms and equipment, accompanied by comprehensive US expertise and surveillance capability. Precipitating an imminent Soviet collapse, the US began providing satellite reconnaissance data of Soviet targets on the Afghan battlefield, intercepts of Soviet communications, secret communications networks for the *mujāhidīn*, delayed timing devices for tons of C-4 plastic explosives for sophisticated guerrilla attacks, long-range sniper rifles, a targeting device for mortars that was linked to US satellites, wire-guided anti-tank missiles, and more than 1,000 state-of-the-art, shoulder-fired Stinger anti-aircraft missiles. In addition, thousands of CIA and Pentagon “advisors” along with ISI teams accompanied the Afghan *mujāhidīn* across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to supervise attacks and plan military operations based on satellite intelligence. Receiving the green light from Pakistani intelligence officials, CIA operations officers built training centers for the *mujāhidīn* in the areas of secure communications, guerrilla warfare, urban sabotage, and heavy weapons.<sup>c</sup>

The CIA and the ISI not only recruited thousands of young men from the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, but also recruited, with Saudi help,

anti-communist Muslim fighters from across the Muslim world. According to Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid,

Between 1982 and 1992, some 35,000 Muslim radicals from 43 Islamic countries in the Middle East, North and East Africa, Central Asia and the Far East would pass their baptism under fire with the Afghan *mujāhidīn*. Tens of thousands more foreign Muslim radicals came to study in the hundreds of new *madrasahs* [religious schools] that Zia's military government began to fund in Pakistan and along the Afghan border. Eventually more than 100,000 Muslim radicals were to have direct contact with Pakistan and Afghanistan and be influenced by the jihad [against the USSR]. In camps near Peshawar and in Afghanistan, these radicals met each other for the first time and studied, trained and fought together. It was the first opportunity for most of them to learn about Islamic movements in other countries, and they forged tactical and ideological links that would serve them well in the future. The camps became virtual universities for future Islamic radicalism. One of the first non-Afghan volunteers to join the ranks of the *mujāhidīn* was Osama bin Laden, a civil engineer and businessman from a wealthy construction family in Saudi Arabia, with close ties to members of the Saudi royal family. Bin Laden recruited 4,000 volunteers from his own country and developed close relations with the most radical *mujāhidīn* leaders. He also worked closely with the CIA, raising money from private Saudi citizens...<sup>d</sup>

In the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, these *mujāhidīn*, now equipped with state-of-the-art military training and more politically conscious than ever before, began to return to their countries of origin to a hero's welcome. At the same time, they began to notice that the governments in their home countries were proxies of the US in the same way the deposed Afghan government was a client of the USSR, and so they initiated Islamic resistance activities directed against US interests in all corners of the world — another case of the chickens coming home to roost. The local component of these *mujāhidīn* comprised the young men who were the refugees and orphans of the 10-year Soviet occupation, many of whom had fled to Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) where they were trained to fight the Soviets and where they were intentionally indoctrinated into a most unrepentant form of Muslim exceptionalism (Wahhābism) by their American, Pakistani, and Saudi patrons. These men had never seen their country at peace and were completely unfamiliar with its customs and traditions, its tribes and ethnicities who had coexisted in peace for centuries, and its history of cooperative

(amongst the various tribes) resistance against foreign invasion. Thus they were the types without a sense of identity and self who were not only open to suggestion but to be exploited by those running the international racket of perpetual conflict and war. These dislocated and itinerant men equipped with an unlimited supply of automatic weapons and a simpleminded desire for *shahādah* (martyrdom) to release them from their misery into a world of eternal bliss became the foot soldiers of a movement that ultimately gelled into the Taliban.

When the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan in 1989, they did not immediately take the proxy government of Muhammad Najibullah with them; however it did not take that government long to fall. By 1992, Burhanuddin Rabbani's forces had taken over Kabul and were competing with **Gulbuddin Hikmatyar** for control of the capital. A civil war, mostly between Rabbani's and Hikmatyar's forces, from 1992–1995 ensued. It was Rabbani's refusal to honor a signed agreement in 1992 in which he would relinquish the post of president that led to the civil war and Hikmatyar's three-year bombing campaign of Kabul resulting in the deaths of approximately 60,000 civilians, and also catalyzing the rise of the Taliban. By the end of 1995, neither Hikmatyar nor Rabbani could form a viable central government, and the rest of the country fell under the control of local warlords, who were either allied with Rabbani, Hikmatyar, or simply autonomous.



At this time, Ahmad Shah Massoud, Rabbani's defense minister, began to separate himself from Rabbani and to offer an "independent" alternative to the dogmatic cruelty of Hikmatyar. But in the mess that is Afghanistan, none of the political and military premiers are either clean enough or principled enough to be considered saviors. During the Soviet occupation, Massoud had obviously struck a secret deal with the Russians; this became apparent when his base in the Panjshir Valley remained off-limits for the Russians even though Soviet military units were routinely scorching the rest of the country. After the Soviet implosion and withdrawal from Afghanistan, Massoud "blew" over to the Americans, carried there by the winds of French intelligence fiat. This is not surprising since Massoud, who spoke fluent French and was lionized by French orientalist Olivier Roy, had spent years cozing up to and developing a relationship with French field operatives. During the 1992–1995 civil war, live television footage showed that Massoud brutally executed Hikmatyar's captured fighters by publicly hanging them from cranes.

As Hikmatyar and Rabbani were making themselves increasingly irrelevant on the domestic political scene, Massoud saw the opportunity to get off a sinking ship by offering refuge and a degree of security to tens of thou-

sands of Afghans, especially those in the south of the war-torn country and Shi'ī Hazaras, who began to flee to the north to seek protection from Massoud (to capture public support in the south, the Taliban would use the same tactic two years later). It was in this humanitarian rescue mission that Massoud was able for the first time to secure financial and philanthropic support from the Islamic government in Iran, but in return he had to embark on laying the groundwork for a representative government for all the Afghan people. As aid from Islamic Iran, bound together with principled imperatives, gradually multiplied, Massoud began to run afoul of his French and American handlers.

True to form, the Americans, coupled with Saudi-imported Wahhābism and Pakistani intelligence and military support, had no interest in a representative government headquartered in Kabul. For several years, they had been preparing, coaching, and training the Taliban to fill the vacuum created by the Soviet withdrawal. Thus starting in 1994, with the help of the Pakistan army, the Taliban began to gain control of all the provinces in the south. Since the Taliban were ethnically Pashtuns and presented themselves as Sunnīs, this was the appropriate starting point for them, and they were initially welcomed by their uneducated Pashtun countrymen, who were simply yearning for peace and order.

The Taliban at first captured public support by openly executing rapists, extortionists, and some warlords. As the Taliban advanced toward Kabul, they for the first time encountered major resistance from the forces led by **Ahmad Shah Massoud**. In an effort to foster a political transition from warlord rule to a civil representative government in which he would also wield considerable power, Massoud went to negotiate with the Taliban; he was hoping that together, they could rule over the country



by forming a coalition government that would be presented to the world as a representative government. Sensing that they were winning the territorial battle, the Taliban rejected Massoud's overtures, and by 1996, they had wrested Kabul from Massoud's control, but it would have been impossible for them to achieve all this with lightning speed without being buttressed by the Pakistani army, Saudi financing, and American planning.

After being expelled from Kabul, Massoud's forces regrouped into what became known as the Northern Alliance. This development launched another civil war (1996–2001), this time between the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. Unable to easily overcome Massoud's resistance in the north as they had done in the southern areas governed by provincial warlords, the Taliban repeatedly offered Massoud the prime minister position in the government so that he would stop his resistance efforts against the US-backed Taliban. Under considerable pressure from the Islamic government

in Iran, Massoud declined the Taliban's conditions for compromise on the basis that he wanted them to join a political process, which would allow the people to decide the future of the country, and not an unelected military cadre that had taken control by force; and which would allow for a transitional government composed either of impartial



individuals or members exclusively from the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, and a *shūrā* representing all the people of Afghanistan. Massoud encapsulated his proposals succinctly in a one-page document entitled *Framework for Peace for the People of Afghanistan* (<http://www.peace-initiatives.com/frame.htm>). By 2001, nearly one million Afghans had fled Taliban control, seeking protection from Massoud in the north. Also at this time, Massoud caught wind of an imminent large-scale attack on US soil, and started issuing warnings at all his public appearances. Ahmad Shah Massoud was assassinated on September 9, 2001, when two Arabian fighters, most likely under orders from the US via Taliban and Pakistani intelligence about Massoud's movements, blew themselves up in close proximity to him.

The euphoria of finally having a modicum of security after nearly two decades of war began to wear thin, as the local Pashtuns soon discovered that the brutal authoritarianism associated with the ultra-sectarian and myopic Sunnī Wahhābism of the Taliban, which had no historical roots in the Sufi-inclined (Wahhābī-averse) Afghanistan, was as foreign and repulsive to them as Soviet occupation. The people would have to endure the same, or even worse conditions, than they did under Soviet occupation, only this time they had to answer to a new master: America.

For its part, the American government, which actively encouraged the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistan) and CIA to create the Taliban to begin with, knew about the puritanical fundamentalism and the dictatorial, anti-democratic character of the Taliban, but chose to back their rise to power in the mid-1990s anyway. In fact, Senator Hank Brown — chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Near East and South Asia and one of the legislators along with Senator John Kerry who wrote legislation at about the same time to take down the Middle Eastern “bank,” BCCI — gave strong US backing to the Taliban, “The good part of what has happened is that one of the factions at last seems capable of developing a new government in Afghanistan.” Another US diplomat echoed the same thoughts in 1997 and went further to suggest that the Taliban were the right

people at the right time for US interests, “The Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis. There will be Aramco, pipelines, an emir, no parliament and lots of Sharia law. We can live with that.”<sup>e</sup>

Everyone knows that Afghanistan has little in the way of fossil fuels — oil and natural gas. But Central Asia and the Caspian Sea Basin has lots of both — a veritable black gold mine. The Soviets then, and the Americans now, are in Afghanistan for the same reason:



they view it as a conduit for Central Asian oil and gas to the Indian Ocean. For nearly three decades now, the US has been salivating over the potential **TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India or Trans-Afghanistan) pipeline**, not only to get oil from the Caspian Sea to India for refinement and then distribution, but also to muscle out the rival Iran-backed **IPI (Iran-Pakistan-India) pipeline**. But in order to achieve this, a “friendly” government — one satisfied with merely the table scraps of the mega-profits generated by the new pipeline, and like the other governments in the Middle East, one that would be willing to be brutal to the nth degree to get these crumbs — would be needed in Kabul. In this regard, official delegations from the Taliban came to the US in 1997 and 1998 to negotiate with Unocal and other US oil companies; at that time, the Karzai brothers were “consultants” with Unocal (in point of fact, they were being groomed to take over after the US decided to cut loose from the Taliban).

But there is more. Whatever Afghanistan may be lacking in fossil fuel reserves, it well makes up for that with a “mother load” of mineral deposits. The Soviets knew this for decades by way of their geological surveys; when the Americans took over the occupation, they “appropriated” all the Russian surveys, and then employed their own geological teams, equipped with the latest high-technology and satellite imaging, to extend the research work. The US teams estimate, and these are just initial figures, over \$3 trillion worth of cadmium, lithium, and other precious metals that will power the information age in the same way that fossil fuels powered the industrial age. None of this wealth of Afghanistan, either primarily through the mining of its mineral deposits or secondarily through the transit of fossil fuels, was ever envisioned by the US or Soviet occupiers to provide health care for Afghan women and land-mine victims, or schooling for Afghan children and orphans, or employment for Afghan men. It was always viewed as someone else’s property.

The Taliban not only satisfied all the US national, energy, and geostrategic objectives, but also another important one. The US viewed the nascent power of ideological and political Islam, which had found a home base in Iran

and was beginning to provide support for the Northern Alliance, as a competitor and thereby, a threat, to the American program of military and economic dominance of the rest of the world. The Americans knew that the Taliban would cite Islamic principles as a basis for their pietistic, yet callous and ferocious, social policies. The US would then use its access to the worldwide Zionist-controlled media to project to the liberal and secular world the alien and obnoxious notion that Islam is anathema to any kind of civil society and that its “principles” cannot be used as a basis to create a viable and representative government acceptable to all peoples, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

In return the Taliban wanted to be recognized by the US and the United Nations as a legitimate government and country in the world of nations, mostly so that it could trade freely, start construction of the pipeline for much-needed “legal and legitimate” revenues, and bargain for aid in order to rebuild a country ravaged by 20 years of war. But the response at home in the US was not what was expected, and under pressure from human rights and womens’ groups, the Clinton administration delayed such recognition. On the other hand, the administration was being pressured by the powerful fossil fuel lobbies as well as bankers associated with the IMF and World Bank to recognize the government and “open up” the country to foreign investment and development. In order to buy some time so that it could figure out how to sugarcoat this enigma, the US State Department told the Taliban they had to do something about the out-of-control drug trade coming out of Afghanistan. Within six months, around the end of 1999 and the beginning of 2000, the Taliban reduced the harvesting and shipment of over 4,000 metric tons of poppy (proto-heroin) to less than 40 metric tons. After achieving this, the Taliban once again demanded recognition, but the US still balked at the prospect.

Now, after being hung out to dry by their main patron and benefactor in the world, and with no revenues coming in whatsoever, even with the lucrative drug trade, the Taliban were in a state of desperation. This is when they threatened to start destroying antique Buddhist relics in Afghanistan. Of course, the Zionist media spun this to suggest that the Taliban Islamists were against any kind of idols and idolatry, and that despite any attachment the faithful of other religions may have for their statues, “Islam” dictated they had to be destroyed. To prevent the Taliban from carrying out their mission, tens of millions of dollars were offered up by preservation and historical societies through the agency of their governments in Europe and America. The same people had never thought of making such wealth available to the long-suffering people of Afghanistan, who had been oppressed and abandoned by the same governments now offering monies to preserve historical structures. At the same time we must ask, why have these people so concerned about Buddhist shrines in Afghanistan turned a blind eye to the serial destruction of Islamic historical sites in Saudi-controlled Makkah and Madinah, and the looting of Islamic relics from museums in Iraq? The



answer is simple: anything related to Islam and Muslims, other than the *Thousand and One Nights*, is not worth respecting and saving. In March of 2001, the Taliban detonated the Bamyān Buddha Statues.

The combination of all these events and geopolitical bumbings by the US led to the manufactured catalytic event of 9/11 and the subsequent Bush Doctrine of preemptive war against a faceless enemy. Summing it all up, Phil Gasper says,

Whatever the US government's current rhetoric about the repressive nature of the Taliban regime, its long history of intervention in the region has been motivated not by concern for democracy or human rights, but by the narrow economic and political interests of the US ruling class. It has been prepared to aid and support the most retrograde elements if it thought a temporary advantage would be the result. Now Washington has launched a war against its former allies based on a strategic calculation that the Taliban can no longer be relied upon to provide a stable, US-friendly government that can serve its strategic interests. No matter what the outcome, the war is certain to lay the grounds for more "blowback" in the future.<sup>f</sup>

- a Michel Chossudovsky, *War and Globalisation: The Truth Behind September 11*. (Ontario, Canada: Global Outlook, 2002), p. 19.
- b William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and C.I.A. Interventions Since World War II*. (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2008), p. 149.
- c Phil Gasper, *Afghanistan, the CIA, bin Laden, and the Taliban*. (Chicago, Illinois: International Socialist Review, Center for Economic Research and Social Change, November–December, 2001).  
[http://www.isreview.org/issues/20/CIA\\_binladen\\_afghan.shtml](http://www.isreview.org/issues/20/CIA_binladen_afghan.shtml)
- d Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, oil and the new great game in central Asia*. (New York, New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2002), p. 130.
- e *Ibid.*, p. 179.
- f *Ibid.*, Phil Gasper.

279 **Battle of Karamah** – a battle between the Palestinians and the Israelis in the town of Karamah on March 21, 1968, resulting from a Palestinian offensive against the Israelis. The battle was, by all accounts, ferocious: the Palestinian

fighters were able to kill at least 29 Israelis and wounded over 70 more, while the Israelis inflicted an equal number of casualties upon the Palestinians, if not a little more. This battle was, in the context of those times, a victory for the Palestinians, after which they were “temporarily” considered heroes in the Arabian world, and the Israelis were shown to be weak and vulnerable. The battle was soon rebranded — because of the counter Israeli-Western-Arabian propaganda and its media sensationalism — from a symbol of hope for freedom-loving and oppression-hating people in the area to a bloody chapter in the inclement history of a Palestinian movement that is better known for the Munich massacre than for the Battle of Karamah.

280 One of their favorite media representatives, the Saudi Adel al-Jubeir,<sup>a</sup> has been assuring American officials, his *awliyā*, that the Saudi government is using the American declared war on terrorism to accelerate “law-enforcement cooperation with the United States as well as Saudi internal political, educational, and religious reforms.”<sup>b</sup> Despite these efforts, the Zionist and Israeli cheerleaders in Washington and the West say these Saudi security crackdowns have been temporary and that internal reform is “glacial” (extremely gradual) at best. And to confuse the non-Qur’anic Muslims even more, President Bush’s and now President Obama’s administration officials continue to be upbeat — at least in public — about Saudi cooperation, although members of the US Congress are furious about the unwillingness of Saudi officials to heed advance warnings that Western targets have become the objective of freedom-loving Muslims whom they call “terrorists.” And what can be expected of these featherbrained officials in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia when Allah’s (ﷻ) words are recited day and night in every one of their *masjids*, “**No, but Allah alone is your Superior Sustainer, and He is the Best Supporter**” (3:150).

What will happen to these Saudi *jāhils* if the strategies of the *kāfirs* are put into high gear? How would they be willing to satisfy their Washington superiors if, for example, the flow of Saudi oil to the world was sabotaged by a few well-placed bombs? These Saudi Arabian officials have gone the distance in their *nifāq*, trying simultaneously to satisfy their *kāfir* superiors, by implementing their orders, and some segments of the Islamic movement, by giving financial support with self-serving strings attached. The contradiction in giving loyalty to two masters is forcing this dishonest kingdom to face its ugly image. It may now have to go to war with its own self to prove that it really is — and always was — on the side of modern *kufri* against Islam.

a **Adel al-Jubeir** (1962–present) – became the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States in 2007, replacing Prince Turki bin Faisal. Before that he was a foreign policy advisor to the current Saudi king, Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, and from 1987–1991, he served as the Special Assistant

to then Saudi ambassador to the US, Prince Bandar bin Sultan. In 1991, he helped to establish the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran for the purpose of engaging the media about Operation Desert Storm. He has also served as a member of the Saudi delegation to the United Nations General Assembly and was a diplomatic fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations from 1994–1995. With an MA from Georgetown University in International Relations (1984), he has attended schools and universities in the US, the UK, Germany, Yemen, and Lebanon. In the early 1990s, he became known in the Middle East as “the ambassador to the Jews” when he escorted Abraham Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and other American Jews to Saudi Arabia.



- b Richard Leiby, *Saudi Arabia’s Oil On Troubled Waters; Adel al-Jubeir Tries to Smooth U.S. Relations*. (Washington, DC: Washington Post, Style (C) section, December 4, 2002), p. C1.

281 The Saudi administrators prove by everything they do that they do not really consider Allah (ﷻ) to be their Master and Superior. As long as they are only talking, instead of doing, their commitment to Islam and Muslims may appear unshakeable; but mere speeches and lectures pale to insignificance compared to the realities of the strategic agreements and military bases by which they confirm their subordination to their American and Zionist allies. The Saudi spokesman Adel al-Jubeir comes across as an imbecile when he tries to court the pleasure of his American superiors, apparently oblivious to the fact that in this shrinking world, whenever he addresses his American audience there are Muslims listening too — and he cannot please Allah (ﷻ) and the powers of this world at the same time. Among the most telling of his statements is his acknowledgement of the massive problems with Saudi Arabia’s education system, and his assurance that reforms are under way, including a program to remove anti-Jewish and anti-Christian diatribes from textbooks. Such is the confusion in Saudi Arabia that there is no distinction between religious Jews and Christians and political Jews and Christians. Al-Jubeir and his ilk, on a moment’s notice from their script writers and directors in Washington, may be willing to throw out the Qur’an altogether, if that is what it takes to curry favor with their lords in Washington and Tel Aviv. This is what happens when Muslims have functionaries who are as detached from this Qur’an as are their superiors in Washington and Tel Aviv. Referring to preachers in the Kingdom who promote hatred, he calls them nut cases. He admits that Saudi money in the past had flowed to some despicable characters overseas, but insists that the government of

Saudi Arabia is now determined to shrink the Islamic affairs sections at Saudi embassies and to monitor aid to Islamic charities.

282 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqidah wa-al-Shari'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 119, (originally narrated by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib).

283 Ibid., (originally narrated by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri).

284 Philip Babcock Gove (editor), *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*. (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, 1976), p. 2361.

285 **The Global Terrorism Index 2003/2004** – published by the London-based World Markets Research Centre (WMRC), it ranked the United States as the fourth most-likely country to face a major terror attack in 2004. Colombia, in South America, led the list, followed by Israel, Pakistan, the United States, and the Philippines. The report's findings stated that although “networks of militant Islamist groups are less extensive in the US than in Western Europe,” the United States' role in Afghanistan and Iraq has exacerbated anti-US sentiment. Key allies of the US also faced high threat levels, according to the report. Britain, America's closest ally, was considered most at risk among European Union nations; it was 10th on the list, tied with Sri Lanka. Other US allies that made the top 20 included Indonesia (7), Russia (16), and Saudi Arabia and Spain (tied at 19).<sup>a</sup> Criteria used to determine the rankings included the motivation for “terror” organizations to mount an attack, the extent to which these groups have a presence in the country, the scale of targets offered, the known capabilities of the groups present, and the skill of the particular nation's “security” services.

Israel and Colombia were the only countries where the risk level was considered extreme, though the nature of the threats to the two countries differed. Colombia faced threats from two major leftist militant groups, a widespread right-wing paramilitary rebellion, and massive narco-trafficking that floods the country with money, arms, and corruption. The report pointed out that in the previous year, the largest Colombian rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known by its Spanish acronym FARC,<sup>b</sup> has shifted its operations from large-scale rural combat to smaller urban bombings and attacks. Israel, meanwhile, faces both internal and external security threats and probably would have ranked higher than Colombia if not for its Islamically-restrained opponents. Because of the conflict with Palestinians residing in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, which has claimed so far almost 3,000 lives, Israel is the one target that invites widespread animosity from the entire Muslim world.

World Markets Research Centre, “*Global Terrorism Index: key findings*. (London, United Kingdom: guardian.co.uk website, August 18, 2003). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/aug/18/alqaida.terrorism1>

- a **World Markets Research Centre (WMRC)** – was a leading global provider of business-critical information and was relied on by thousands of executives in hundreds of multinational corporations, financial institutions, and governments across the world. In 1998, it launched the world’s first same-day country analysis and risk assessment service, covering 185 countries. WMRC provided analysis of market conditions and key events around the world helping companies assess risk, make informed decisions, and seize business opportunities in their domestic and foreign markets. All of its outstanding common stock was purchased by **IHS Global Insight, Inc.** in 2003, <http://www.ihsglobalinsight.com/>.

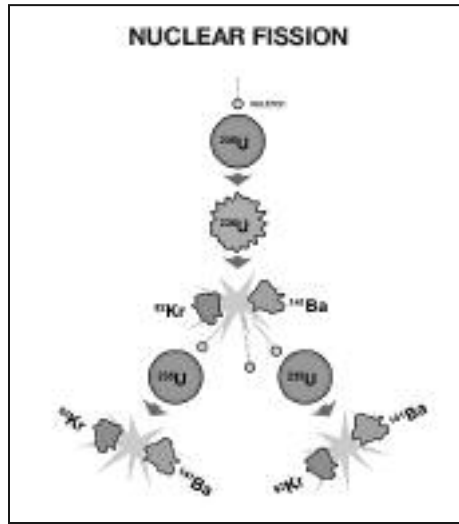


- b **Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC or FARC-EP)** – commonly translated into English as the *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army* (South America). With 9,000–12,000 armed combatants, as well as thousands more supporters mostly in the rural areas of Colombia, it is also said to operate in Venezuela, Panama, and Ecuador. The FARC was established in 1964 by the Colombian Communist Party to defend what were then autonomous communist-controlled rural areas. It is Latin America’s oldest, largest, most capable, and best-equipped insurgency of Marxist origin; it was governed by a general secretariat led by longtime leader **Manuel Marulanda**, who died in March, 2008 and was replaced by new commander in chief, Alfonso Cano. It is a Marxist revolutionary guerilla organization — the majority of whose fighters are organized into a peasant army — that claims to represent the interests of Columbia’s poor people against the wealthy classes, their ties to American imperialism, and their control of Colombia’s natural resources largely through foreign multinational corporations. Opponents — mostly the US-backed proxy government in Colombia, the US State Department, the Canadian Government, the New Zealand Government, and the European Union — regard the FARC to be a violent non-state actor and a terrorist organization, that primarily funds its activities through ransoms for kidnappings and taxation of the illegal



drug trade. They accuse it of carrying out serial bombings, murder, mortar attacks, narcotrafficking, kidnapping, extortion, hijacking, and paramilitary action against Colombian political, military, and economic targets. On the other hand, there are others like Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, who have publicly rejected FARC's classification as a terrorist organization, suggesting that it be officially recognized as a rival political party by the Colombian Government, thereby indicating that its grievances are legitimate.

**286 atomic bomb** – derives its explosive force from **nuclear fission** as a result of a neutron chain reaction, developed in the 1940s by the United States into a “usable” weapon. Research began in the United Kingdom (Britain) in 1940 and was transferred to the US after its entry into WWII the following year. Known as the Manhattan Project, the work was carried out under the direction of US physicist Robert Oppenheimer at Los Alamos, New Mexico. After one test explosion, two atomic bombs were



dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima (8-6-1945) and Nagasaki (8-9-1945), each nominally equal to 200,000 tons of TNT (trinitro toluene). Declassified US documents suggest that the US knew the Japanese surrender was only days or hours away, because the US had already torched 85 Japanese cities, the construction being mostly of wood, with an unrelenting fire-bombing campaign; however, US president Harry S Truman gave the order to drop the atomic bombs on the Japanese so as to scare Joseph Stalin, then ruler of the USSR, into not even thinking of occupying any other regional territory. Those documents also indicate that Oppenheimer's first plan was to explode the atomic bomb in the sky above the Japanese cities such that when the population looked above at the blast, their retinas would be incinerated, driving them all blind. The USSR first detonated an atomic bomb in 1949 and the UK in 1952.

**Hiroshima** – an industrial city and port on the south coast of Honshu, Japan, destroyed by the first wartime use of an atomic bomb. The city has been largely rebuilt since the WWII; the population in 2007 was estimated

to be 1.6 million. Toward the end of the war, the city was utterly devastated by the United States atomic bomb; more than 4 mi<sup>2</sup> (10 km<sup>2</sup>) was obliterated. Civilian, non-combatant casualties totaled at least 137,000 out of a population of 343,000 in 1945; 78,150 were found dead, others died later in an agonizing slow death.

**Nagasaki** – an industrial port (coal, iron, shipbuilding) on Kyushu island, Japan; as of 2009, the population was estimated to be 446,000. Nagasaki was the only Japanese port open to European trade from the 16th century until 1859. The United States government dropped an atomic bomb on this non-military target three days after doing the same on Hiroshima. Of Nagasaki's population of 212,000 in 1945, 73,884 innocent Japanese civilians were instantly incinerated, and 76,796 injured, many of whom died through painful stages. The immediate body count did not take into consideration the long-term victims of radiation poisoning and subsequent birth defects. The rate of congenitally deformed children per 1,000 births in Iraq — due to the use of depleted uranium bombs — now exceeds the same rate in Japan at the end of WWII and its aftermath.



287 Listen further to the way they pervey their weapons of mass disinformation. They ask: is the war on terrorism only about terrorism? And they answer: of course not. On a deeper level, they say, the war on terrorism is about the ideologies that use terrorism in an attempt to end the democratic experiment that began in 1776 (independence year of the US) and that has so far spread to more than 150 countries. Most of those ideologies are “jihadist” — heirs to Nazism and communism but with an Islamist bent. The most important of these ideologies are Khomeinism, Wahhābism, bin Ladenism, Qutbism, and Mawdūdism. All seek to force “infidels” out of the Middle East and to reconquer lands that the jihadists insist have been stolen. The ranting of the opinion-makers of *kufri* goes on: jihadist ideology has been behind virtually every terrorist blow inflicted on the United States — from the Hizbullah bombing of the US Marine barracks and embassy in Beirut (1983), to the first attack on the World Trade Center (1993), to the bombing of US troops in the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia (1996), to the attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (1998), to the attack on the USS Cole off the coast of Yemen (2000), to al-Qaeda’s magnum opus on September 11, 2001.

288 **Eliot A. Cohen** (1955–present) – currently serving as professor and director of the Strategic Studies Program at the John’s Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. He is a leading neocon member of the Project for the New American Century. In the George W. Bush administration, he served as counselor to the US State Department under Secretary Condoleezza Rice from 2007 to 2009, replacing Philip Zelikow, who was earlier appointed executive director of the 9/11 commission.

**Robert James Woolsey Jr.** (1941–present) – headed the CIA from 1993–1995 during the first part of the Bill Clinton administration in the United States. Along with Richard Perle (head of the Defense Policy Board in the George W. Bush administration), George Shultz (US secretary of state during the Reagan administration), Martin Peretz (chairman of the *New Republic* magazine), Mortimer Zuckerman (publisher of the *US News and World Report* magazine), and Henry Kissinger (US secretary of state in the Nixon administration), he is currently a member of the board of advisors of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), a neocon think tank that focuses on developing US policy for the Islamic East. He is also a founding member of the Set America Free coalition, a patron of the Henry Jackson Society in the UK, another neocon think tank, and a member of the advisory board for United Against Nuclear Iran. Like his neocon friend, Eliot Cohen, Woolsey is also a member of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), which advocated the US invasion of Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein as early as 1998. Immediately after the 9/11 incident, Woolsey and the other neocons, seeing this as the opportune crisis to launch their wars of aggression into majority Muslim countries, started talking up the idea that Iraq was complicit in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. His prominence in championing perpetual war against a faceless enemy leads one to doubt his sincerity in participating with the anti-war protestors of the 1960s. Or is it possible that even at that time, he was a government intelligence agent spying on the activities of “subversives” and leftists, while posing as a vocal supporter, in order to hone his credentials for the positions he would subsequently occupy?



289 The reality is very different: for years American and Israeli intelligence services have known all about the marginal forces in Muslim countries capable of such violence. September 11, 2001, came after almost one year of an Islamic Palestinian *intifāḍah* that had brought Islamic activism back to the attention of the intelligence services of *kufri*. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the CIA and Mossad had infiltrated the Islamic fabric of Afghanistan, al-Qaeda, and probably other places.<sup>a</sup> It is unbelievable that after several



years of the “war on terror,” the shadowy world of the intelligence super-secret operations are no nearer to declaring the US safe from attack. Instead they still talk of the need to protect America from an Armageddon scenario planned by Muslims somewhere beyond their reach. In fact if any such terrorism happens these intelligence agencies will probably know of it well in advance. These Mossad and CIA functionaries, supported by their Arabian cohorts, continue to wage war against Islam in the name of Islam.

- a Lukery, *Bombshell: Bin Laden Worked for US Till 9/11*. (Imperial Beach, CA: World News Daily Information Clearing House, July 31, 2009). <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article23173.htm>

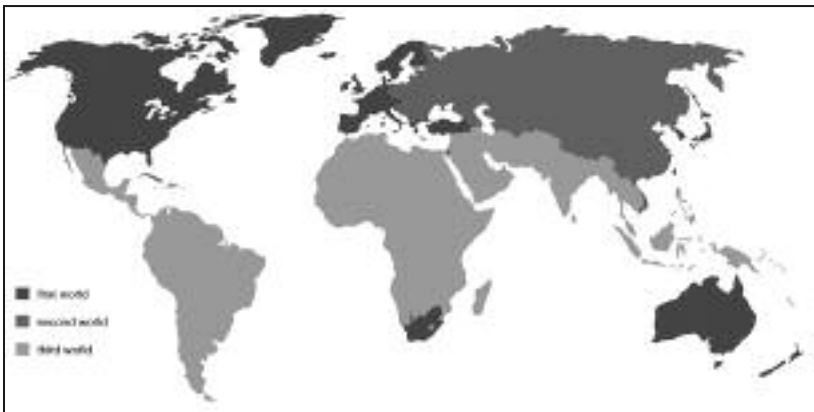
**Cold War** (1947–1991) – when the US and the USSR emerged as the dominant military powers after WWII, they began to face off against each other in an ideological battle to create spheres of influence around the world. This ideological struggle of capitalism versus communism is characterized as a “cold” war because there was no direct exchange of fire or bombardment between the world’s first two nuclear powers; thus the major battle for hearts and minds, at least in the limited sphere of interaction between the two countries, was mostly political, economic, and academic. It was thought that any heightened provocation, such as the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, could lead to a nuclear war that would not only destroy both countries, but also a good portion of the earth. In practice, however, the staging areas for the “hot” war, complete with the use of chemical, biological, and conventional weapons, between the US and the USSR were other non-European countries such as the Koreas, Vietnam, and many countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Islamic East — where all tolled, tens of millions of innocent people lost their lives, millions more were dislocated, the local economies were ravaged, and despotic ruling classes were installed into proxy political apparatuses that presented themselves either as anti-communist or anti-American. In all of these “other” countries, where new weapons systems were tested on live human subjects and where intelligence operations of all types mushroomed, the communist and the capitalist versions of secularism tried to prove which system of governance was more fit to command the allegiance of the rest of the world.

Within this cold war scenario, the world was divided into three categories: the *First World* (under US influence or US security umbrella), the *Second World* (under USSR influence or Soviet security umbrella), and the *Third* or *Non-aligned World*, which officially had no security agreement with either camp, but in practice was coerced into aligning with either the capitalist or communist bloc. The First World typically referred to those countries that were capitalist, highly industrialized, with the most advanced economies, with the highest standard of living, and with the most advanced

technology. The First World included the NATO member states — the USA, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany (West), Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain (since 1982), Turkey,<sup>b</sup> and the United Kingdom; US-aligned states — Israel, Japan, and Korea (South); former British colonies — Australia, South Africa,<sup>c</sup> and New Zealand; and more or less industrialized capitalist countries that had adopted US-inspired forms of representation and American culture — Austria, Ireland, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The Second World typically referred to the former communist-socialist, industrial states in the so-called Eastern bloc, and China. The Eastern bloc included the Warsaw Pact (the communist analog to NATO) countries — the USSR (Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan), Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Germany (East), Hungary, Poland, and Romania; Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia); and Cuba.

Finally, the Third World referred to all the other countries in the world, typically alluding to under-developed or developing nations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Islamic East. A map of the outdated three-world model, which had little meaning after the collapse of communism and which will gradually be relegated to a few pages in history books as capitalism continues to implode, is shown below.



- b Even though Turkey is the only Muslim majority member of NATO, it has never really been perceived to be a member of the “first” world, which is basically a Euro-American, Judeo-Christian club. Turkey’s odyssey around admission into the EU, Pope Benedict XVI’s comments on how Turkey does not belong to the Christian-Hellenistic culture of Europe, and the roadblocks thrown in Turkey’s way by former and current Euro-

pean heads of state, are all indicative of the fact that Turkey is an outsider when it comes to what is considered to be the “West.”

- c During the Cold War, South Africa was an anomaly in that the white descendants of European occupiers (the British and the Dutch) always lived as if they were part of the First World, whereas the vast majority of the native, indigenous African peoples in the country suffered under some of the worst third-world conditions on earth.

290 The whole letter, reproduced below, appeared as an advertisement in the Washington Post, News (A) section, on September 10, 2002. It can also be found at the Saudi US Embassy archives (<http://www.saudiembassy.net/archive/2002/press/page18.aspx>):

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On the eve of the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks against the American people, I take the opportunity to renew to you and the families of the victims and indeed the entire American nation, the sincere condolences and sympathy of the Saudi people and myself.

As long as I live, I shall never forget the horrible scenes of carnage, the raging fires, the smoke that covered the horizon, and the innocent people who jumped out of windows in their attempt to escape. On that fateful day, the whole world stood with the American people in unprecedented solidarity that made no distinction as to race, religion or language.

It was the perverted hope of the perpetrators of this heinous crime that they could bring humiliation to and terrorize the American nation. But the brave people of the United States of America, whose greatness lies in the strength of its brave sons and daughters in facing adversity, and which is enriched by their remarkable achievements, all of this will make them ever stronger than the designs of the evildoers. Instead of being terrorized by this catastrophe, they became more steadfast and determined.

The target of the terrorists who engineered this crime was humanity at large. They hoped that this outrageous act would incite and ignite bloody strife among different faiths and civilizations. But their evil was turned against them, for all humanity united to fight terrorism, and wise voices from all corners of the world arose to echo your declaration that terrorism has no religion or nationality; that it is pure evil, condemned and abhorred by all religions and cultures.

Mr. President, we in Saudi Arabia felt an especially great pain at the realization that a number of young Saudi citizens had been enticed and deluded and their reasoning subverted to the degree of denying the tolerance that their religion embraced, and turning their backs on their homeland, which has always stood for understanding and moderation. They allowed themselves to be used as a tool to do great damage to Islam, a religion they espoused, and to all Muslims. They also aimed at causing considerable harm to the historic and strong relationship between the American people and the people of Saudi Arabia. I would like to make it clear that true Muslims all over the world will never allow a minority of deviant extremists to speak in the name of Islam and distort its spirit of tolerance. Your friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia denounced and condemned the September 11 attacks as strongly as did the American people. We, like you, are convinced that nothing can ever justify the shedding of innocent blood or the taking of lives and the terrorizing of people, regardless of whatever cause or motive. Therefore, we do not simply reiterate sincere and true condolences to the relatives of the victims, but assure all of our continued will and determination to do our utmost to combat this malignant evil and uproot it from our world.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to stand solidly against terrorism. We shall act, independently as well as collectively, with the US-led coalition to wage a fierce and merciless war against the terrorists in order to eradicate this deadly disease that threatens all societies.

In conclusion, I would like to say to you, my dear friend, that God Almighty, in His wisdom, tests the faithful by allowing such calamities to happen. But He, in His mercy, also provides us with the will and determination, generated by faith, to enable us to transform such tragedies into great achievements, and crises that seem debilitating are transformed into opportunities for the advancement of humanity. I only hope that, with your cooperation and leadership, a new world will emerge out of the rubble of the World Trade Center: a world that is blessed by the virtues of freedom, peace, prosperity and harmony.

Sincerely,  
 Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud  
 Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister,  
 and Commander of the National Guard

Jeddah, 10 September 2002 AD  
 3 Rajab 1423 Hijra

**‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Āl Sa‘ūd** (1924–present) – commonly referred to as Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, he is the fifth of 37 sons of the late founder of modern Saudi Arabia, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Āl

Sa'ūd, to become king. Officially, he acceded to the throne when his half-brother King Fahd died in 2005; unofficially he has been the de facto ruler of the country since 1996 when Fahd suffered a stroke and was no longer able to discharge his duties. He also serves as the prime minister, the commander of the Saudi National Guard, and the president of the High Council for Petroleum and Minerals. In a bid to show that "Islam is an accommodating religion," King Abdullah sponsored a "sincere dialogue between believers from all religions" in Madrid, Spain (2008). After ruling the country for over 14 years, he has not felt the need to sponsor an "intrafaith" dialogue between Sunnis and Shi'is; rather he has tried to exacerbate sectarian tensions among Muslims, specifically in Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, while appeasing those he considers to be Ahl al-Kitāb in Washington and Tel Aviv. According to Forbes list of the world's richest royals, Abdullah is reputed to have a personal fortune of \$17 billion ([http://www.forbes.com/2009/06/17/monarchs-wealth-scandal-business-billionaires-richest-royals\\_slide\\_5.html](http://www.forbes.com/2009/06/17/monarchs-wealth-scandal-business-billionaires-richest-royals_slide_5.html)).



291 **George W. Bush** – see endnote 129 in Volume 3.

292 Adel al-Jubeir, *Verifying all the facts; Middle East coverage not always credible*. (Washington, DC: Washington Times, News section, May 6, 2003).

293 Ibid.

294 Ibid.

Other statements from top US public officials:

In November 2001, US Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, "Saudi Arabia has been prominent among the countries acting against the accounts of terrorist organizations." One year later, in November 2002, he reinforced this point in the following statement, "We cooperate with Saudi Arabia at many different levels — law enforcement, intelligence exchange, picking up people who have been involved or are suspected to be involved in terrorist activity, in sharing information with the law enforcement activities and intelligence agencies of both governments — and I have no reason to believe that Saudi Arabia is not committed to the campaign against terrorism."<sup>a</sup>

a Ibid., Adel al-Jubeir.

295 In its untiring efforts to prove itself on the wrong side of the Qur'an and the wrong side of history, and to show evidence that it is hero-worshipping the

*kāfirs*, the medieval Saudi ruling class is not short on providing confirmation of its true convictions. Facing a public relations crisis in the United States, the Saudi embassy in Washington announced in the spring of 2003 a nationwide advertising campaign to portray Saudi Arabia as a victim of extremists and as a reliable ally in President Bush's war on terrorism. "Despite all of the attention we have received, few people know what Saudi Arabia looks like or appreciate how far we have come in the last 30 years," Saudi ambassador Prince Bandar bin Sultan said in a statement, announcing the campaign. "We are a modern nation with normal people living normal lives."<sup>a</sup> The campaign was largely a response to mounting accusations in the US, despite the statements cited above, that Saudi Arabia had hindered investigations into terrorist activities and funnelled money into organizations that sponsored "suicide bombings" and other attacks against civilians. Almost every time the Saudis or the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon are mentioned in the media, people are reminded that 15 of the 19 alleged hijackers in the 9/11 attacks were Saudis.

Prince Bandar asserted Saudi Arabia also is the victim of terrorism, citing bombings in Riyadh and elsewhere in Arabia. "The terrorists responsible for the recent tragedies in Riyadh reminded us that there are no distinctions to race, religion or nationality in such horrific acts," he said. "We are in the same boat, and we must work together to destroy them."<sup>b</sup>

How true! And what a beautiful *tafsīr* of these *āyāt*; the shallow Muslim rulers and their cunning *kāfir* superiors are truly in the same boat. Prince Bandar said his government is a strong ally in the war on terrorism. "The level of cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia is described by law-enforcement authorities in both countries as excellent," he said.<sup>c</sup> The embassy said the advertisements will run in the top 25 media markets during the summer of 2003. "These ads are one way of telling the American people about Saudi Arabia," Prince Bandar said. "Over the past 30 years, the kingdom has made tremendous progress in all areas. Currently, there are big changes going on in Saudi Arabia, and we want Americans to know about them."<sup>d</sup>

a Barbara Ferguson, *Saudi Arabia Launches New PR Campaign in US*. (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Arab News, June 11, 2003).  
<http://archive.arabnews.com/?page=4&section=0&article=27274&d=11&m=6&y=2003>

b Author unknown, *The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia launches new ads*. (Washington, DC: Saudi Embassy press release, June 9, 2003).  
<http://www.saudiembassy.net/archive/2003/press/page52.aspx>

c Ibid.

d Ibid.

296 Muḥammad Abū Zuhrah, *Khātam al-Nabiyyin, Volume 2*. (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1401AH), p. 709.

297 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 1411AH), p. 125.

298 Ibid., p. 126.

299 **'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd** (died 33 or 34AH) – a companion of Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), who was among the first to affirm his Islam. He held administrative and diplomatic duties in the administrations of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, but eventually broke with the latter. As one of the most prolific transmitters of the hadith, especially via the narrators of Kūfah where he settled, he is especially recognized for his traditions on the interpretation of the Qur'an, having been present for many revelations. His career and reputation were marked by his humble bedouin origins, personal loyalty to the Prophet (ﷺ), and subsequent conflict with the Makkan ruling class.

Ibn Mas'ūd's quote:

Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 1411AH), p. 127.

300 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 1411AH), p. 127, (originally narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās).

«إلى عباد الله. إلى عباد الله. أنا رسول الله. من يكرهه الجنة»  
وقال ابن عباس وغيره: كان دعاء النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: «أي عباد الله ارجعوا»

301 Ibid., p. 128, (originally recorded by al-Bukhārī in the chapter on *maghāzī*).

302 Ibid., p. 129.

303 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 1411AH), p. 129.

304 Ibid., pp. 129–130.

305 Ibid., p. 140.

306 Ibid., pp. 140–141.

يا رسول الله لو إستعرضت بنا عرض البحر لقطعناه معك؛ ولو سرت بنا إلى برك الغماد لسرنا معك؛ ولا نقول لك كما قال قوم موسى لموسى: إذهب أنت وربك فقاتلا. إنا ههنا قاعدون. ولكن نقول: إذهب فنحن معك وبين يديك وعن يمينك وعن شممالك مقاتلون.

307 Ibid., p. 141.

308 Ibid.

309 Ibid.

310 Ibid., (originally cited in *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*).

311 Narrated by ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and recorded by Imams Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, al-Nisā’ī, and Ibn Mājah.

لو توكلتم على الله حق توكله لرزقكم كما ترزق الطير تغدوا خماسا و تروح بطانا

312 **guerilla war** – irregular soldiers fighting in a small unofficial unit, typically against an established or occupying power, and engaging in sabotage, ambush, and the like, rather than in organized pitched battles against an opposing army. Guerilla tactics have been employed both by resistance armies in wartime and in peacetime by national liberation groups and militant political radicals.

313 **mutiny** – organized act of disobedience or defiance of commanding officers by two or more members of the armed services. In some naval and military laws, mutiny has always been regarded as one of the most serious of crimes, punishable in wartime by death.

314 Muḥammad Abū Zuhrah, *Khātam al-Nabiyyin*, Volume 2. (Kuwait: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī), p. 723, (narrated by Bakr ibn ‘Abdillāh).

البكاء من الرحمن . والصراخ من الشيطان

315 Ibid.

316 Narrated by Rufā‘ah al-Zarqī and recorded by al-Haythamī, Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, and al-Nisā’ī.

لما كان يوم أحد وانكفأ المشركون قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم استوتوا حتى أتني على ربي عز وجل فصاروا خلفه صفوفًا فقال اللهم لك الحمد كله اللهم لا قابض لما بسطت ولا باسط لما قبضت ولا هادي لما أضللت ولا



مضل لمن هديت ولا معطي لما منعت ولا مانع لما أعطيت ولا مقرب لما باعدت ولا مبعد لما قربت اللهم ابسط علينا من بركاتك ورحمتك وفضلك ورزقك اللهم إني أسألك النعيم المقيم الذي لا يحول ولا يزول اللهم إني أسألك النعيم يوم العيلة والأمن يوم الخوف اللهم إني عائد بك من شر ما أعطيتنا وشر ما منعت منا اللهم حبب إلينا الإيمان وزينه في قلوبنا وكره إلينا الكفر والفسوق والعصيان واجعلنا من الراشدين اللهم توفنا مسلمين وأحينا مسلمين وألحقنا بالصالحين غير خزايا ولا مفتونين اللهم قاتل الكفرة الذين يكذبون رسلك ويصدون عن سبيلك واجعل عليهم رجزك وعذابك اللهم قاتل الكفرة الذين أوتوا الكتاب إنه الحق.

- 317 In the beginning of a 1989 essay entitled *The End of History?* which he later expanded into the book, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992),<sup>a</sup> **Yoshihiro Francis Fukuyama** (1952–present) made the following statement,

The triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism. In the past decade, there have been unmistakable changes in the intellectual climate of the world's two largest communist countries, and the beginnings of significant reform movements in both. But this phenomenon extends beyond high politics and it can be seen also in the ineluctable spread of consumerist Western culture in such diverse contexts as the peasants' markets and color television sets now omnipresent throughout China, the cooperative restaurants and clothing stores opened in the past year in Moscow, the Beethoven piped into Japanese department stores, and the rock music enjoyed alike in Prague, Rangoon, and Tehran.

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. ...for the victory of liberalism has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world. But there are powerful reasons for believing that it is the ideal that will govern the material world in the long run.<sup>b</sup>

On a biographical note, Fukuyama received his PhD in government from Harvard University, studying under Samuel P. Huntington among others. Later, he was an analyst at the RAND Corporation and then served as a deputy director of the US State Department's policy planning staff. He was a key contributor to the formulation of the Reagan Doctrine (a strategy implemented by the US to counter the global influence of the Soviet Union in the last years of the Cold War), and thus contributed to the influential position of neoconservative ideas in the foreign policy of future administra-



tions, both Democratic as well as Republican. Since 1997, he was active in the Project for the New American Century, recommending to both Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush to pursue a policy of forced regime change in Iraq. In 2003, he began to distance himself from the neoconservative agenda, calling for Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's resignation, and in 2006, he identified neoconservatism with Leninism, which he claimed was a Bolshevik tragedy. Fukuyama endorsed Barack Obama for president of the United States in 2008.

a Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*. (New York, New York: Avon Books, Inc., 1992).

b Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?* (Wes Jones website, 1989).  
<http://www.wesjones.com/eoh.htm#source>

318 **Tiananmen Square** – a large city square in Beijing, People's Republic of China named after the Tiananmen Gate (literally, *Gate of Heavenly Peace*) to the Forbidden City. It is the site of many significant ancient and current events of great political and cultural significance, the most recent of which was the 1989 student protests calling for greater transparency and liberalism in the structure of the government. The protest movement lasted seven weeks before government forces cracked down on the students, killing an estimated 400–800 unarmed demonstrators, while also sacrificing 50 soldiers in the confrontation.

319 Peter Gay wrote two volumes on the interpretation of the subject:  
 Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism (Volume 1)*. (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1966).

Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Science of Freedom (Volume 2)*. (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1969).

320 **American Revolution** – took place during the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783). Along with the French Revolution, which occurred around the same time, these two were the first consciously secular forms of government that were born from the birth pangs of the Enlightenment in Europe. The American Revolution started when the 13 European colonies in what is now the northeastern United States decided to secede from British sovereignty over the territories to establish self rule. By formulating their own provincial governments, the 13 colonies rejected the British Parliament as they were allowed no representation therein but still had to pay taxes to the crown. In order to bring the recalcitrant colonists under their control again, the British sent combat troops across the Atlantic. However,

as the revolutionary war began, the 13 colonies agreed to jointly defend themselves against British aggression, thereby giving birth to the United States of America, which declared its independence from Britain on July 4, 1776, repudiating the monarchy and severing all ties with it. The British formally abandoned any claims to the new United States with the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

Among the achievements of the revolution were the preference of a republican form of government (over oligarchy or monarchy) that would respond to the “will of the people;” the incorporation of certain natural rights, codified in the Bill of Rights, into the new constitution according to the Enlightenment view of liberalism; and the balancing of a strong national government with broad personal liberties.

What of course is left unsaid in this history is how the original 13 colonies came to be “established” in the new world. In the same way Israel has occupied and squatted upon the land of the Palestinians, the European settlers/squatters did with the native American population, which was never compensated for its land and which was gradually pushed by rapid American westward expansion toward the Pacific until it was altogether exterminated or confined to “reservations.” Throughout the revolutionary period and for scores of years later, the native Americans as well as the imported African slave population had no representation, and no natural, civil, or human rights; thus their collective will had no bearing on or belonging to the so-called “will of the people.” Both were not even considered to be completely human until perhaps 100 years after the declaration of independence from the British Empire.

**French Revolution (1789–1799)** – inspired by the intellectual ferment coming out of the Enlightenment, it is considered to be the quintessential secular departure from all previous forms of monarchical governance either loosely or more directly tied to the dogma of the Church. It started as a revolt by the Third Estate (commoners) against the privileged classes: the First and Second Estates (the clergy and the nobility, respectively). The revolt was not only a mass protest (march on Versailles that forced the royalty to move back to Paris), but also a paramilitary (assault on the Bastille, a fortress-prison in Paris) and ideological (the passage of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen) affair. In a major turnover of previous French history, the French monarchy was replaced by a republic in 1792 and in the following year, the most visible reminder of the monarchy, King Louis XVI, was publicly guillotined. This sparked Maximilien Robespierre’s Reign of Terror (1793–1794) in which somewhere between 16,000–40,000 people were killed, and which ended with Robespierre’s execution.

The revolution brought about a tremendous shift in the exercise of power from the Roman Catholic Church — throne and altar were regard-

ed by many to be highly interdependent — to the secular state. Before the revolution, the Church had been the largest single landholder in the French kingdom; however, in 1789, all Church property was declared to be at the disposal of the new nation-state and was then sold off to the highest private bidder in an effort to raise revenue for the interim government. In 1790, all religious orders were dissolved, and monks and nuns were encouraged to return to private life. Later in the same year, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was passed, making the remaining clergy employees of the state, rather than subservients to the authority of the Church in Rome. During the Reign of Terror, the state initiated a massive effort to de-Christianize the population by massacring priests, razing churches, replacing Christian holy days with civic festivals, and destroying religious symbols of all kinds throughout France. On an ideological level, the state started to favor the Cult of Reason over the Church. Near the end of the revolution, the commoners became disillusioned with the state's ferocious de-Christianization programs, resisting and often killing the revolutionary guards. But by this time the damage had already been done; insofar as the new determinants of social policy, a momentum was created that would ultimately culminate in the formal separation of church and state in 1905, much as the American revolutionaries had done earlier in the formulation of the US Constitution.

The emergence of secular republics, liberal democracies, and ideological rationalizations that sustain these forms of governance as the ideal forms of representation can all trace their origins to the French Revolution.

321 **St. Augustine** – refer to endnote 28 in Volume 4.

**St. Thomas Aquinas** – refer to endnote 95 in Volume 3.

322 **James Mill** (1773–1836) – Scottish philosopher and political thinker who developed the theory of *utilitarianism*. He is remembered in the West for his political articles, and for the rigorous education he gave his son John Stuart Mill. Born near Montrose, Mill moved to London 1802. Associated for most of his working life with the East India Company, he wrote a vast *History of British India* 1817–1818. He was one of the founders of University College, London, together with his friend and fellow utilitarian Jeremy Bentham.

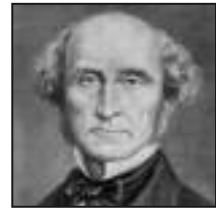


**Joseph Schumpeter** (1883–1950) – US economist and sociologist. In *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942) he contended that Western capitalism, impelled by its very success, was evolving into a form of socialism because firms would become increasingly large and their managements

increasingly divorced from ownership, while social trends were undermining the traditional motives for entrepreneurial accumulation of wealth. Schumpeter was born in Moravia, now the Czech Republic, and migrated to the US in 1932. He was deeply interested in mathematics, and he took part in the founding of the Econometric Society in 1930. His writings established him in the West as an authority on economic theory as well as the history of economic thought. Among other standard reference works, he wrote the *History of Economic Analysis* (1954), published posthumously.



**John Stuart Mill** (1806–1873) – English philosopher and economist who wrote *On Liberty* (1859), the classic philosophical defense of liberalism, and *Utilitarianism* (1863), a version of the “greatest happiness for the greatest number” principle in ethics. His progressive views inspired *On the Subjection of Women* (1869). He was born in London, the son of James Mill. In 1822 he entered the East India Company, where he remained until retiring in 1858. In 1826, as described in his autobiography (1873), he passed through a mental crisis; he found his father’s bleakly intellectual utilitarianism emotionally unsatisfying and abandoned it for a more human philosophy influenced by Coleridge. In *Utilitarianism*, he states that actions are right if they bring about happiness and wrong if they bring about the reverse of happiness. *On Liberty* moved away from the utilitarian notion that individual liberty was necessary for economic and governmental efficiency and advanced the classical defense of individual freedom as the mark of a mature society and a value in and of itself; this change can be traced in the later editions of *Principles of Political Economy* (1848). He sat in Parliament as a Radical 1865–1868 and introduced a motion for women’s suffrage. His philosophical and political writings include *A System of Logic* (1843) and *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861).



**Paul Tillich** (1886–1965) – Prussian born US theologian. In 1929 he was appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Frankfurt, a post from which he was removed by the Nazis. He arrived in the US in 1933 and served as professor of theology at the Union Theological Seminary 1933–1955, Harvard University 1955–1962, and the University of Chicago 1962–1965. Tillich received his PhD from the University of Breslau in 1911. Ordained a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1912, he served as a chaplain during World War I.



323 James Madison, *The Federalist No. 10: The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection (continued)*. (New York, New York: The Daily Advertiser, November 22, 1787).  
<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm>

324 **Thucydides** (460–400BCE) – Athenian aristocratic historian of the Peloponnesian War. Though said to be scrupulously accurate in his narrative of events, he is not altogether unprejudiced. Exiled for 20 years in the North Aegean Islands (424BCE) by the democracy for military incompetence, he was consistently critical of the democratic system and its leaders in the war years.

**Pericles** (495–429BCE) – Athenian general and statesman of the aristocratic Alcmaeonid family, who presided over the “Golden Age” of Athens, and was virtually its uncrowned king (443–429BCE). Politically a radical, he helped push through the constitutional reforms that brought about full Athenian democracy (462–461BCE). A staunch opponent of Sparta, he sparked the Peloponnesian War (431–404BCE) due to his unremitting hostility for Spartans and their allies. Renowned for his oratory, his *Funeral Speech* (430BCE), as recorded by Thucydides, is an impassioned apologia for Athens’ democratic principles and system of government.

325 Jean Jacques Rousseau (G.D.H. Cole, translator), *The Social Contract and the Discourses*. (New York, New York: Random House, Inc., 1993) p. 271.  
[http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon\\_04.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_04.htm)

326 John Stuart Mill, *Considerations On Representative Government*. (New York, New York: BiblioBazaar, 2007), p. 100.  
[http://www.constitution.org/jsm/rep\\_gov.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jsm/rep_gov.htm)

327 John Jay, *The Federalist No. 2: Concerning Dangers from Foreign Force and Influence*. (New York, New York: The Independent Journal, October 31, 1787).  
<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa02.htm>

328 Muḥammad Abū Zuhraḥ, *Khātam al-Nabiyīn, Volume 2*. (Kuwait: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī), p. 698, (originally narrated by Abū al-Aswad and recorded by al-Bayhaqī).

ما ينبغي لنبي ليس لأمة الحرب وأذن بالخروج إلى العدو أن يرجع حتى يقاتل وقد دعوتكم إلى البقاء فأبئتم إلا الخروج فعليكم بتقوى الله تعالى والصبر عند البأس إذا لقيتم العدو وانظروا ماذا أمركم الله.

329 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1411AH), p. 146 (originally cited by al-Wāqidi).

330 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur’ān, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 507–508.

331 Ibid., p. 508, (originally recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī).

332 **cystic fibrosis** – a “widespread” genetically determined disorder affecting mucous secretions in many parts of the body, which become thickened and viscid (gluey). The consequent blockage of mucus-secreting small ducts causes small cystic swellings behind the sites of blockage. It causes damage to some major organs including the lungs, liver, and pancreas, and it results in obstructions in the alimentary tract.

**hemophilia** – an inherited disorder of blood coagulation, resulting from a deficiency in one of the proteins responsible for normal blood clotting. This is the antihemophilic factor (AHF, or factor VIII), which is normally produced by the liver and circulates in the blood. The gene responsible is X-linked, so the condition is transmitted by the mother and reveals itself in the sons. There is a 50% chance of a mother carrying the disease transmitting it to her sons, and a 50% chance of her daughter becoming a carrier. It causes recurrent bleeding after minor trauma, mainly into joints. Damaged joints result in deformity and crippling. Bleeding can be ameliorated by giving fresh plasma which contains Factor VIII, or by giving a concentrated form of the factor prepared from freshly donated blood. A milder but similar condition called Christmas disease, or *hemophilia B*, arises in males and females deficient in another clotting factor, factor IX.

**Rh disease** – a complication of pregnancy in which the red blood cell types of the pregnant woman are incompatible with the fetus she is carrying. On their surface red blood cells are covered by antigens, structural markers that give the cells a distinct immunological identity. All the red blood cells in a person’s body have the same surface antigens, but these surface markers differ from person to person. When a woman is exposed to blood that is unlike her own (most commonly as a result of the passage of fetal red blood cells across the placenta or from a blood transfusion), she develops antibodies to destroy the foreign blood in her circulation as part of a normal immune response. Called *Rh disease* because it was first studied in rhesus monkeys, this incompatibility most commonly occurs when a woman lacks the D antigen in her red blood cells (“Rh negative”) and carries a fetus with the D antigen (“Rh positive”). However, there are dozens of other, less common blood cell antigens that can cause the same clinical problems. The antibodies produced persist for life and, during pregnancy, can cross the placenta and destroy fetal red blood cells if they are positive for the antigen that caused the original immune reaction. This results in fetal anemia, ranging

from only mild to severe anemia, in which *hydrops fetalis* (an accumulation of fluids throughout the fetal body) or even fetal death occurs.

Women who are Rh sensitized are usually identified by routine testing for red blood cell antibodies during early pregnancy. If they are present, the amount of antibody is determined; if they are below a certain level (usually 1 to 8), then it is not likely that the fetus is severely anemic. If the level of antibody is above this threshold, the severity of fetal anemia must be more closely evaluated. Usually, the extent of the anemia is indirectly estimated by analyzing amniotic fluid obtained by amniocentesis. In some cases, the fetal red blood cell count is measured directly by drawing blood from the umbilical cord in a procedure like amniocentesis known as umbilical cord blood sampling. If testing indicates that the fetus is severely anemic and if the pregnancy is not close enough to term to permit a safe delivery, a transfusion is performed. The transfusion is done by injecting Rh negative red blood cells into the fetal abdomen or directly into the fetus's blood stream by way of the umbilical cord. The procedure is repeated at regular intervals until delivery.

Fortunately, Rh disease can largely be prevented by giving Rh negative pregnant women an injection of Rh immune globulin at about 28 weeks of gestation and at any time during pregnancy or after delivery (if the baby is Rh positive).

**muscular dystrophy** – a genetically determined group of disorders in which muscles undergo progressive degeneration and increase of fibrous tissue (fibrosis). The nervous system is not involved. The condition appears early in life, and causes symmetrical weakness and wasting of groups of muscles, such as those of the lower limbs, shoulder, girdle, and face. In one form of the disease (Duchenne type), the muscle cell membrane lacks a specific protein (dystrophin), which normally prevents the muscle structure from being destroyed by its own contractions.

**Tay-Sachs disease** – a rare inherited disorder in which an abnormal accumulation of lipid occurs in the brain, causing mental deficiency and blindness in infancy. The condition is named after British ophthalmologist Warren Tay (1843–1929), who described cherry-red spots in the retinas of affected children, and US neurologist Bernard Sachs (1858–1944). This disease is predominant among Jews.

- 333 The modern scientific *jāhiliyah*, long ago divorced from scriptural input, propelled by its secular philosophies, has formulated criteria for male infertility according to which the use of artificial insemination by a donor is held to be justified. These criteria are irreversible lack of sperm from childhood or as a result of disease, radiation, chemotherapy or sterilization; insufficient quantities of sperm or severe sperm malformation; and other forms of uncorrectable impotence.



After this conflict with human nature, the scientific spirit in the West moves on. Any couple that applies for artificial insemination must be carefully studied to ascertain that no other solution to their problem — namely infertility, childlessness — is available. Both partners must agree in writing to receive sperm from a donor, and the man must also sign that he undertakes to recognize the resultant child as his own. In the parallel Arabian society a man's word and a tribe's tradition was their honor; they needed no signatures. Otherwise, what we see today is a repeat performance of 'Ā'ishah's summary of sexual practice in Arabia before Islam.

The scientifically "sanitized" version of sexual hybridization institutionally chooses the biological father with great caution so as to winnow out those with faulty health, hereditary diseases, and poor fertility. By contrast the Arabians had to rely on their instincts and judgement alone; they did not have these fancy technological methods to select their mates for them. Today, the scientific search for a suitable donor has to choose the biological father, who is not married to the mother, who herself may or may not be married to the "legal" father. The sperm bank has to determine his sperm-count at a volume of over 1.5 million sperm/mL, motility of over 40%, and proper morphology in at least 50% of the sperm.

The biological fathers who consent to have their sperm settle in laboratories on their way to the womb are generally chosen from "quality" populations (many are students); they undergo considerable physical and mental evaluation. A comprehensive interview is conducted to determine whether there are any problems in the sperm-donor's past or family history, with particular emphasis placed on hereditary diseases and the mental health of the donor's family. Comprehensive testing is done to determine whether the sperm carry sexually transmitted diseases, particularly AIDS. These tests are repeated six months later; the sperm sample is then frozen until similar responses six months later indicate that the sperm may be artificially, yet scientifically and medically, delivered into the reproductive system of a potential mother.

A listing of physical factors (blood type, Rh factor, body structure, and color of skin, eyes, and hair) is made. The psychological and social backgrounds of the sperm-donating biological father are also recorded to "facilitate" the child's "absorption" by the family and surroundings. At the same time the couple (the future parents) must be informed that although every effort will be made, there is no way to ensure that the biological father will be similar in every way to the legal father. To add a touch of "sentimentality" to this scientific process, the identities of the biological father and the couple receiving the artificial insemination remain anonymous in most countries. The information is kept in a hospital safe and is not released to anyone. In this regard, the Arabian *jāhiliyah* was much more liberal: almost everyone was privy to the single and multiple affairs of a woman who would ultimately conceive and deliver a baby.

334 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by Ibn Kathīr, Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, Abū Dāwūd, and al-Ḥākim.

لما أصيب إخوانكم بأحد جعل الله أرواحهم في أجواف طير خضر ترد أنهار الجنة وتأكل من ثمارها وتأوي إلى قناديل من ذهب في ظل العرش فلما وجدوا طيب مشربهم ومأكلهم وحسن متقبلهم قالوا يا ليت إخواننا يعلمون ما صنع الله لنا لنلا بزهدوا في الجهاد ولا ينكلوا عن الحرب فقال الله عز وجل أنا أبلغهم عنكم فأنزل الله عز وجل هؤلاء الآيات (ولا تحسبن الذين قتلوا في سبيل الله أمواتا بل أحياء عند ربهم يرزقون) وما بعدها

335 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āshir, 1411AH), p. 161.

336 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by Ibn Kathīr.

عن ابن عباس قال إن الله قذف في قلب أبي سفيان الرعب يوم أحد بعد الذي كان منه فرجع إلى مكة وكانت وقعة أحد في شوال وكان التجار يقدمون في ذي القعدة المدينة فينزلون ببدر الصغرى في كل سنة مرة وإنهم قدموا بعد وقعة أحد وكان أصاب المسلمين القرع واشتكوا ذلك إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم واشتد عليهم الذي أصابهم وإن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ندب الناس لينطلقوا بهم ويتبعوا ما كانوا متبعين وقال لنا ترخلون الآن فتأتون الحج ولا يقدرون على مثلها حتى عام قابل فجاء الشيطان يخوف أولياءه فقال إن الناس قد جمعوا لكم فأبى عليه الناس أن يتبعوه فقال إني ذاهب وإن لم يتبعني أحد فانتدب معه أبو بكر وعمر وعثمان وعلي وطلحة والزبير وسعد وعبد الرحمن بن عوف وأبو عبيدة وابن مسعود وحذيفة في سبعين رجلا فساروا في طلب أبي سفيان حتى بلغوا الصفراء فأنزل الله (الذين استجابوا لله والرسول من بعد ما أصابهم القرع للذين أحسنوا منهم واتقوا أجر عظيم)

337 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āshir, 1411AH), p. 162, (originally narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī).

338 Ibid., p. 162, (originally narrated by Abū Rāfi‘ and recorded by Ibn Mardawayh).

339 Ibid., p. 163, (originally narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and others).

340 Ibid.

341 Reported by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and others.

والذي نفسي بيده لأخرجن ولو وحدي

342 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āshir, 1411AH), p. 166, (originally narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by al-Bukhārī).

343 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and cited by Ibn Kathīr who got it from the hadith collection of Ibn Mardawayh.

إذا وقعتم في الأمر العظيم فقولوا حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل

344 There is a world of misinformation and there are governments and interests that want to convince the Muslims they stand no chance against powers and authorities, regimes and militaries, establishments and technologies that have the capability of extinguishing the Muslim militaries out of existence. The anti-Islamic plan here is to throw fear into the Muslim heart, doubts into the Muslim mind, and a loss of morale in the Muslim military. And all this amounts to the work of Satan who has no influence except over his peers and those amenable to suggestion. It is Satan who inflates the image of his minions. It is he who disguises the fact that Allah's (ﷻ) power is superior to all other powers. And it is he who fools his flunkies into believing that a material superpower has the means to vanquish man's moral power, which comes from the power of being with Allah (ﷻ). Satan does all his work simply through talking; but he does not use his own voice. He uses his half-hardy and light-handed influence in the psyche of man so that man himself comes out and speaks for his devilish master-of-ideas. Allah (ﷻ) gives man precise information about Shayṭān,

**And when everything will have been decided [on the Day of Judgement], Satan will say, "Behold, Allah promised you something that was bound to come true! I, too, held out [all manner of] promises to you, but I deceived you. Yet I had no power at all over you, except that I called upon you — and you responded to me. Hence, blame not me, but blame yourselves. It is not [becoming] of me to be your advocate, nor shall you be my advocate [in front of Allah]; for, behold, I have [always] refused to admit that there was any truth in your erstwhile belief that I had a share in Allah's authority and dominion." (14:22).**

Recently, a US congressionally funded panel concluded that US public diplomacy — official efforts to communicate US intentions, policies, and values — was "absurdly and dangerously underfunded." The panel, which focused on the Arab and Muslim world's hostility toward the United States, found that funding for all public diplomacy programs amounted to \$600 million in the year 2002 — much less than 1% of the US defense budget, without even counting the cost of the war in Iraq.

There are budgets that are allocated for the sole purpose of eroding the Islamic commitment, and counteracting the strategic objectives of involving the Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ) in the remaking of the human soul and

the restructuring of human society. It is the United States and Israel primarily, and European and Asian nuclear powers secondarily that are the prime source of terror in our world today; but you would not know that if you are tuned into the *shayṭānī* commentaries of how the world is run and how justice is done. When Shayṭān draws the mental map for us we dare not say the world is terrorized by Israel and the United States; and concurrently we should be eager to accuse Muslims of being the world's terrorists. Fear begins inside each one of us. We can identify Shayṭān by freezing that moment which causes us to fear for our lives, asking immediately, "Why should I fear?" Shayṭān becomes especially apparent when our fear comes from having to resist or fight an oppressive, unjust, and hegemonic military power.

Thankfully, in our world today, some Muslims are rising to the challenge, motivated more by these life-giving and power-inducing words of Allah (ﷻ) than by the refrains of Shayṭān, his media minions, and his *mushrik* naysayers. They are showing with their precious lives that Allah (ﷻ) tips the odds in favor of the securely committed Muslims. They are proving that the desire for *shahādah* deals a death blow to injustice and oppression as surely as the Sun rises and sets. Consider the 34-day war in the Summer of 2006 between the lightly-equipped Hizbullah fighters and the third largest military in the world, the Israeli war machine. These Israelis boasted that they would destroy Hizbullah, that they would finish it for good, and that they would bomb it into the stone age. The Americans and their chicken-hearted sycophants around the Red Sea from Egypt to Jordan to Arabia accepted the fiction and allowed the war to go on for nearly five weeks.

These *mushriks* and their Muslim *munāfiq* cohorts wanted all the same to obliterate Hizbullah, wanted to nip any attempt at Islamic resurgence and Islamic self-determination in the bud. But what happened? They finally had to stop the war, not because Hizbullah was losing but because their "bastion of democracy" in the Islamic East could no longer sustain the war effort. Hizbullah did not have cutting-edge surveillance equipment, they did not have state-of-the-art guidance technology for their missiles, they did not have tanks and fighter aircraft, but they had the steely determination that comes with a commitment to none other than Allah (ﷻ). They were ready to go to Allah (ﷻ) at any time; and some of them, in fact, made it; and they are now imploring us Muslims still here on earth to continue the war effort. That is why they went toe-to-toe with the Israelis, the Americans, and their pencil-necked Arabian accomplices.

Hamas's struggle in Ghazzah (Gaza) harkens back to the boycott imposed on the early Muslims of Makkah, and the Islamic resistance in Afghanistan has fought the world's only superpower to a point where it feels it has to "negotiate." And now Muslims around the world are catching wind of these deliriously liberating victories. Islamic resistance movements are

springing up all over the place from Somalia to Morocco and from Arabia to Central Asia. The economic collapse taking place in America is evidence of the fact that the situation is now too difficult for worldwide imperialism and Zionism to manage — and all this because Muslims are coming to realize that real power, which has the capacity to trump “superpower,” comes from obedience to Allah’s (ﷺ) words and directions.

345 **Abū Sufyān** (or Abū Ḥanzalah) – his name was Sakhr ibn Ḥarb ibn Umayyah of the Qurayshī clan of ‘Abd Manāf, and he was a leader within the Makkan elites of Quraysh, better known for his hostility to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). In the build-up to Badr, Abū Sufyān escaped back to Makkah with one of the largest and most heavily guarded caravans, as between 40 and 70 armed warriors were ensuring its safety. Though he did not participate directly in any of the fighting at Badr, he was the behind-the-scenes mastermind and the absentee signal caller of the Makkan forces who came to do battle with the nascent Islamic State in Madinah. When the two legions met at Badr, the Makkan troops, who were commanded by Abū Jahl (‘Amr ibn Hishām) were defeated and Abū Sufyān’s son Ḥanzalah was killed. Another son, ‘Amr, was taken prisoner. Abū Sufyān then led the “counter-attack” many months later at Uḥud where he and the Makkans barely got away with a victory against the Muslim forces. Abū Sufyān also showed up as a “military general” at the Battle of al-Khandaq (the Trench) where the confederate Arabian armies failed in their military campaign against the Muslims.

Abū Sufyān was a rich and reputable merchant, who repeatedly led the great Makkan caravan either to Syria in the summer or to Yemen in the winter. Like most of the upper-class merchants he took up a hostile attitude to the Islamic movement led by Muhammad (ﷺ), which concerned him in a personal way because his daughter Umm Ḥabibah had married a follower of the Prophet (ﷺ) and sought refuge with him in Ḥabashaḥ (Africa).

**Donald H. Rumsfeld** (1932–present) – assumed the position of US Secretary of Defense on January 20, 2001. Before assuming that post, the former US Navy pilot had also served as the 13th secretary of defense, White House chief of staff, US ambassador to NATO, US Congressman, and chief executive officer of two Fortune 500 companies. Mr. Rumsfeld was responsible for directing the actions of the Pentagon against real and imagined threats from Islamic quarters around the world. This American war, which is still in progress as we explain the above *āyāt*, is being waged against a backdrop of major change in the Pentagon. The Pentagon has devised a new war strategy, replacing the old model for sizing forces with a newer approach more relevant to the build-up of momentum in the Islamic World. Mr. Rumsfeld



proposed and US President George W. Bush approved a significant reorganization of the worldwide command structure, known as the Unified Command Plan, which resulted in the establishment of the US Northern Command and the US Strategic Command.

Mr. Rumsfeld attended Princeton University on academic and NROTC scholarships (BA, 1954) and served with the US Navy (1954–1957) as an aviator and flight instructor. In 1957, he transferred to the Ready Reserve and continued his naval service in flying and administrative assignments as a drilling reservist until 1975. He transferred to the Standby Reserve when he became secretary of defense in 1975 and to the Retired Reserve with the rank of captain in 1989. In 1957, he came to Washington, DC to serve as administrative assistant to a congressman. After a stint with an investment banking firm, he was elected to the US House of Representatives from Illinois in 1962, at the age of 30, and was reelected in 1964, 1966, and 1968. Mr. Rumsfeld resigned from the US Congress in 1969 during his fourth term to join the president's cabinet. From 1969–1970, he served as director of the Office of Economic Opportunity and assistant to the president. From 1971–1972, he was counsellor to the president and director of the Economic Stabilization Program. In 1973, he left Washington, DC, to serve as US Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Brussels, Belgium (1973–1974). In August 1974, he was called back to Washington, DC, to serve as Chairman of the transition to the presidency of Gerald R. Ford. He then became chief of staff of the White House and a member of the president's cabinet (1974–1975). He served as the 13th US secretary of defense, the youngest in US history (1975–1977).

From 1977 to 1985 he served as chief executive officer, president, and then chairman of G.D. Searle & Co., a worldwide pharmaceutical company. The successful turnaround there earned him awards as the outstanding chief executive in the pharmaceutical industry from the *Wall Street Transcript* (1980) and *Financial World* (1981). From 1985–1993 he was in private business. Mr. Rumsfeld served as chairman and chief executive officer of General Instrument Corporation from 1990–1993. General Instrument Corporation was a leader in broadband transmission, distribution, and access control technologies. Until being sworn in as the 21st secretary of defense, Mr. Rumsfeld served as Chairman of the Board of Gilead Sciences, Inc., a pharmaceutical company.

Before returning for his second tour as secretary of defense, Mr. Rumsfeld chaired the bipartisan US Ballistic Missile Threat Commission, in 1998, and the US Commission to Assess National Security Space Management and Organization, in 2000. During his career, Mr. Rumsfeld continued his public service in a variety of federal posts, including: member of the US President's General Advisory Committee on Arms Control (1982–1986); special presidential envoy on the Law of the Sea Treaty (1981–1983); senior advisor to

the President's Panel on Strategic Systems (1983–1994); member of the US Joint Advisory Commission on US/Japan Relations (1983–1984); special presidential envoy to the Middle East (1983–1984); member of the National Commission on Public Service (1987–1990); member of the National Economic Commission (1988–1989); member of the Board of Visitors of the National Defense University (1988–1992); member of the Commission on US/Japan Relations (1989–1991); member of the US Trade Deficit Review Commission (1999–2000). While in the private sector, Mr. Rumsfeld's civic activities included service as a member of the National Academy of Public Administration; as a member of the boards of trustees of the Gerald R. Ford Foundation, the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and the National Park Foundation; and as chairman of the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships, Inc. In 1977, Rumsfeld was awarded the US's highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

346 The whole unedited quote, given below, appeared in the *Washington Post*,

“Last week marked the 20th anniversary of the suicide bomb attack on the US Marine barracks in Beirut — a blast that killed more than 240 Americans. Soon after that attack, President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz asked me to take a leave of absence to serve as presidential envoy for the Middle East. That experience taught us lessons about the nature of terrorism that are relevant today as we prosecute the global war on terror. President Bush has made clear that the only way to win today's war is to carry the fight to the enemy and roll back the terrorist threat to civilization, “not on the fringes of its influence, but at the heart of its power.” He has it right. To understand why, one might consider what happened in Beirut two decades ago.

“The attack occurred when a truck loaded with explosives drove into the US Marine barracks near the Beirut airport. The logical response was to put cement barricades around buildings to prevent another truck bombing. But the terrorists soon figured out how to get around those defenses. They began lobbing rocket-propelled grenades over targets that had such barricades. So the tendency was to hunker down even more. We started seeing buildings along the Corniche, the popular seaside boardwalk that runs for several miles along the sea in Beirut, covered with a metal mesh, so that when rocket-propelled grenades hit the mesh, they would bounce off, doing little damage. So what did the terrorists do next? They adapted. They watched the comings and goings of embassy personnel and began hitting soft targets — people on their way to and from work. For every defense, the terrorists moved to another avenue of attack. Within six months of the first attack, most of the American troops had pulled out of Lebanon. And from that experience, terrorists learned important lessons: that terrorism is relatively low-cost and deniable and can yield substantial results at low risk and often without penalty. Terror-

ism can be a great equalizer — a force multiplier. And terrorism works in the sense that it can terrorize, and even a single attack can influence public opinion and morale and alter the behavior of nations.

“Terrorists have a sizable advantage. A terrorist can attack at any time, in any place, using virtually any technique. And it is not possible to defend every potential target at all times in every place against every form of attack. That being the case, the way to defeat terrorists is to take the war to them — to go after them where they live and plan and hide, and to make clear to states that sponsor and harbor them that such actions will have consequences. That is what President Bush is doing in the global war on terrorism. When our nation was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001, the President immediately recognized that what had happened was an act of war and must be treated as such; that weakness can invite aggression; and that simply standing in a defensive posture and absorbing blows is not an effective way to counter it. He declared that henceforth ‘any person involved in committing or planning terrorist attacks against the American people becomes an enemy of this country... Any person, organization, or government that supports, protects, or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent and equally guilty of terrorist crimes. [And] any outlaw regime that has ties to terrorist groups and seeks or possesses weapons of mass destruction is a grave danger to the civilized world — and will be confronted.’ In the ensuing two years, thousands of terrorists have been rounded up, and two terrorist regimes have learned the President meant what he said.

“The approach the President has taken is even more important as we enter a new and dangerous security environment. When the Marine barracks were attacked two decades ago, the terrorist threat was largely conventional. Terrorists had weapons that could kill dozens or, in the case of the Beirut bombing, hundreds of people. On Sept. 11 the terrorists grew even bolder — bringing the war to our shores and using techniques that allowed them to kill not hundreds but thousands. Yet consider: the explosive agent used on Sept. 11 was jet fuel. The danger we face in the 21st century is the threat posed by terrorists armed not with jet fuel but with more powerful weapons. If the world does not deal with the emerging nexus between terrorist networks, terrorist states and weapons of mass murder, terrorists could one day kill not more than 240 people, as in Beirut, or more than 3,000 people, as on Sept. 11, but tens of thousands — or more.

“That is why our country and our 9-nation coalition is at war today. That is why we have forces risking their lives at this moment, fighting terrorist adversaries in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere across the world. It is also why it is critical that our country recognize that the war on terrorism will be long, difficult and dangerous — and that as we deal with immediate terrorist threats, we also need to find ways to stop the next generation of terrorists from forming. For every terrorist whom coalition forces capture, kill,



dissuade or deter, others are being trained. To win the war on terror, we must also win the war of ideas — the battle for the minds of those who are being recruited by terrorist networks across the globe.

“That is why the President is using all elements of national power: military, financial, diplomatic, law enforcement, intelligence and public diplomacy. Because to live as free people in the 21st century, we cannot live in fear and remain free people. The task is to stop terrorists before they can terrorize. And even better, we must lean forward and stop them from becoming terrorists in the first place. That is a lesson we learned two decades ago in Beirut.”<sup>a</sup>

a Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Take the Fight to the Terrorists*. (Washington, DC: Washington Post, Style (B) section, October 23, 2003), p. B07.

347 **martyr** – the English word is a transliteration of the Greek word meaning *witness*. Coincidentally or not that is the meaning of the Arabic word *shahīd*. The word is used in Acts of the Apostles, 1:8 as witnesses to Jesus’s (ﷺ) life and resurrection. But as persecution spread, the term became reserved for those whose witness for their faith had cost them their lives. Those who were persecuted and survived were called *confessors*. In Christian history it is said that the first martyr was the deacon Stephen (Acts, 7:54–60). Then James the Apostle was executed by Herod Agrippa, who ruled 41–44CE. The age of the martyrs as classically understood in the West closed with Constantine’s adoption of Christianity in 324CE, though the classic *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* centers on the English Reformation. Early Christians, it is said, embraced martyrdom, believing that it would aid the Christian cause and that they would be spared the agonies of death (see the letters of Ignatius). Martyrs soon became venerated as powerful intercessors before God. Their bones and other relics were used to sanctify places of worship. Accounts of their lives, often embellished with legend, were popular forms of devotional literature. The formal origins of the cult of martyrs can be traced to a custom begun in Smyrna about 156CE, commemorating the death of Polycarp with a celebration at his tomb.

348 It appears from the literature and available information that these *shahīds* are in actual fact alive, possessing life, and filled with animation and spirit, albeit outside the material, physiological, and biological norms. There can be no laboratory knowledge of how exactly this happens, as humans on this earth have no sensual access to the ephemeral world. Another explanation conveys the idea that the *shahīds*’ expectation and anticipation of Paradise is so certain that they are where they are destined to be, in Paradise, before they actualize their post-Judgement Day presence there. Another description suggests that these *shahīds* are soundly existing in the bosoms of flying birds who thrive on the sustenance of Paradise and of all its luscious and alluring bounty.

Less widespread opinions among the *fiqh* scholars about how a *shahīd* is to be handled and buried are as follows. Some Muslim *faqīhs* say that a *shahīd* should be shrouded in his own clothes, offered the *janāzah* (funeral) prayer, and should not receive a ritual bath if he passed away in a state of ritual purity (*ṭahārah*). But if the *shahīd* passed away in a condition of major ritual impurity (ejaculation, menstruation, or afterbirth blood flow) then he or she should be given a ritual bath; a pre-adolescent or mentally retarded individual would also have to be washed if he was to be classified as a *shahīd*. Other Muslim *faqīhs*, though, said that the funeral bath and shroud are not required, and they cite the hadith, “*Udfunūhum bi-dima’ihim: Bury them with their blood (stains),*” or another similar hadith that says, “*Zamillūhum bi-dima’ihim: Enshroud them with their blood (stains).*”<sup>a</sup> These hadiths are in reference to the *shahīds* of Uḥud who were not given a ritual cleansing.

a Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1411AH), p. 169, (originally narrated by Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh and recorded by Imams al-Bukhārī, al-Nisā’ī, al-Bayhaqī, al-Shāfi‘ī, and Aḥmad ibn Hanbal).

349 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj, Volume 4*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1411AH), p. 169, (recorded in the hadith collections of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Nisā’ī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, and al-Tirmidhī).

350 Then there are some delicate *fiqhī* issues such as what the rule is on someone who is killed as a *maḏlūm* (a victim of aggression or crime) in civilian life? Some *fiqhī* scholars say that in such a case, the victim does not receive the ritual bath but receives the ritual *janāzah* prayer. However the overwhelming majority of *faqīhs* say he is ritually cleansed like all the other deceased, unless he is a civilian who dies at the war front.

In another case when a *kāfir* enemy attacks the Muslims by surprise in their residential areas (that is, the Muslims have not made counter military preparations for such an attack), in this case these Muslim victims and casualties are administered the ritual bath, shroud, and funeral prayer because they are not considered active combatants in a combat-ready area.

351 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ and recorded by Imam Muslim.

يغفر للشهيد كل ذنب . إلا الدين

352 Recorded in the hadith collection of al-Suddī.

عرضت علي أمتي في صورتها كما عرضت علي آدم وأعلمت من يؤمن بي ومن يكفر

353 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqidah wa-al-Shari'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 175.

354 **United States Information Agency (USIA)** – although originally established in 1953 as the USIA, in 1978 it was designated as the International Communication Agency (ICA), but in 1982 it was redesignated as the United States Information Agency.

**Voice of America (VOA)** – formed in 1942, the Voice of America (VOA) is the official external radio and television broadcasting service of the US federal government. Around the world, VOA provides a wide range of programming for broadcast on radio, television, and the internet in 44 languages, promoting a positive view of the United States. The broadcast service's mission, signed into law in 1976 by President Gerald Ford, reads as follows,



The long-range interests of the United States are served by communicating directly with the peoples of the world by radio. To be effective, the Voice of America must win the attention and respect of listeners. These principles will therefore govern Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts: (1) VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective, and comprehensive; (2) VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions; and (3) VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies.

VOA is generally considered by its broadcast targets as a propaganda arm of the US State Department.

**Fulbright Program** – established in 1946 by legislation introduced by Senator J. William Fulbright, the program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the US government and is designed to “increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.” With this goal as a starting point, the Fulbright Program has provided



almost 300,000 participants — chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential — with the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

Currently, the Fulbright Program operates in over 155 countries worldwide. The primary source of funding is an annual appropriation made by the US Congress to the State Department. The Congressional appropriation for the Fulbright Program in fiscal year 2008 was \$215.4 million. Foreign governments, through binational commissions or foundations abroad, contributed approximately \$60 million directly to the program (source: [http://www.cies.org/about\\_fulb.htm](http://www.cies.org/about_fulb.htm)).

355 This essential media component of imperialism operates many information centers and libraries abroad, some of which have been damaged or destroyed in anti-American protests by peoples who can see beyond the glittering words of golden interests. These American *shayṭānī* mouthpieces employ US citizens as well as foreign nationals in more than 100 countries. The broadcasting activities of the VOA are supplemented by private broadcast facilities. These include what used to be Radio Free Europe (now an enterprise that beams programming to Iraq and the Middle East to soften up the public for the serious military stuff that will follow years later); Radio Liberty, which used to be aimed at the people of the defunct Soviet Union; Radio Marti, which broadcasts to the people of Cuba; and Radio Sawa, which is trying to win over the Arabian street by mixing pop-music with intervals or bursts of skewed news reporting.

Muslims who contextualize these indispensable *āyāt* should know that a military war is always preceded by a psychological war as was the stated case at Uḥud. Therefore, Allah (ﷻ) had to drive the point home to the unsuspecting and unknowing Muslims of those days and of our times. In another eye-opening *āyah* He says,

**O Apostle! Be not disturbed by those who jockey with each other in denying the truth [of Allah's powers in society], such as those who say with their mouths, "We are committed [to Allah], while their hearts are not committed [to Allah]... (5:41).**

These accurate words and letter-perfect descriptions are as precise about the Makkan *mushriks* as they are about the imperialist Americans, Europeans, and Israelis. They all prefer to smother the world with misinformation concerning Allah's (ﷻ) practical power presence in the rise and fall of civilizations and in the progress or regress of social orders. Any power or establishment that excludes Allah (ﷻ) from being the first and last decision-maker, whether it is in regard to the maturation of human activities

over time or whether it is in regard to the binding importance of those activities, is by definition a *kāfir*. Even those who exchange a commitment to Allah (ﷻ) for a denial of Him will not in the least do any harm to Allah (ﷻ); they will only harm themselves. They will also have to endure rebounding and tormenting repercussions in this world, not to mention painful circumstances in the approaching world. This ideological man-made trap with its negative social consequences is echoed in other picture-perfect words in the faithful Qur’an. Put the following *āyah* in the general context extrapolated from the campaign at Uḥud,

**Do they [the deniers of Allah’s practical powers] think that by all the wealth and scions with which We provide them We [but want to] make them compete with one another in doing [what they consider] good works! No, but they do not perceive [their error]! (3:55–56).**

356 The emergence of this whole “disavowing religion” scenario is predicated on one mistake: these types of people have never really understood the nature of this *dīn*, or its course of action. Muslims, unfortunately and particularly, cannot be excluded from this indictment. Muslims, though they should know better because they have the most immediate access to Allah’s (ﷻ) faultless words, are continuing to contribute to this confusion. Military engagements are part of human life, and as such they require obedience to a set of rules, preparation, and a solid commitment from all those involved.

Short of this, the outcome is likely to be inconclusive or at worst, unfavorable and unpalatable. For participants in a military encounter, inasmuch as the situation is a life-and-death one, the lessons learned are unique; they are never forgotten because they are associated with forfeited lives of close acquaintances. Human potential and human capabilities are tested to the max at the war front; and thus Muslims rise to the highest level of clarity in this situation. Conversely, in our Muslim predicament today, even though we read these *āyāt* frequently in our congregations, our detachment from warfare initiatives has caused us to blank out at any practical exposition of this Qur’anic lesson and prophetic background knowledge, thereby eroding our God-given clarity into the kind of confusion and bewilderment afflicting everyone else.

357 This does not contradict earlier statements about the exposition of miracles and man’s effort in bringing about this particular exercise of Allah’s (ﷻ) power. Man has no innate ability to generate miracles; they all come from Allah (ﷻ). However, to the extent that man has exhausted his human potential in the service to Allah (ﷻ) and he needs extra help, the integra-

tion of miracles in the Muhammadi experience was directly related to the quality of human commitment to Allah's (ﷻ) cause.

358 Obviously they are, to some degree, a part of nature, and man's dwelling on natural sciences away from scriptural guidance has resulted in some quarters with a theory of evolution. The proponents of this thesis try to convince man he is descended from animal ancestors and shares many characteristics with animals. Yet he differs from even those animals that stand nearest to him on the evolutionary scale in ways that are not merely quantitative but qualitative. A leap into a new manner of existence has taken place, even in matters like sexuality and death, which on the surface seem to be very similar in human and animal life. For human beings, sexual contact has become a personal, not merely a biological, relation; while the fact that they know they are going to die makes possible a relation to time that an animal cannot have.

In addition, human beings have developed a whole range of activities that are simply unknown — or, at the most, only very dimly foreshadowed — at the lower animal level. Such activities are language, art, science, religion, politics, and dozens of others. This special rank in creation of human beings finds expression in the theological statement that man is made in the image of God (Genesis, 1:26). Admittedly, there has been much debate over the meaning of this statement. Some have seen the image in dominion, in human responsibility for the creation, so that humans are in some sense God's steward or vicegerent (*khalifah*). Others have seen the image in rationality, but this may be too narrow a reading of the relationship between God and man. Another interpretation is that the image of God in the human being is the capacity for a limited measure of freedom and creativity.

According to Christian and Jewish theologians, it is this "image" in human existence that makes man distinct from animals and suggests a similarity, however distant, to God as the Creator of all that exists. Some of the early Christian writers, noting in the Genesis story that God had made the man and woman "in our image, after our likeness," supposed the image to be the potentiality for growth toward God, while the likeness would be the completion of the process, a relation so close to God that they spoke of "deification." Although their reading of Genesis was exegetically improbable, it nevertheless afforded another interpretation of biblical morphology. Those versions of scripture see human nature as unfinished and embarked upon a pilgrimage, the end of which would be a full communion with God.

359  **Aws** – a social division of tribal affiliations in Yathrib who along with the other main social division of tribal affiliations called the Khazraj wanted and welcomed Muhammad (ﷺ) to Yathrib to settle a simmering misunderstanding between the two blocs. Both of these blocs, renamed and reunited as al-Anṣār — the supporters of the Prophet (ﷺ) — along with the political

refugees from Makkah (the Muhājirūn) established the first Islamic citizenry and constituency in Madinah and thus are considered the quintessential representation of Islamic urban, ideological, and practical life.

**Khazraj** – one of the two major social and tribal strata in the time Muhammad (ﷺ) was struggling for freedom, justice, and equality with divine inspiration. Most of the “converts” who championed the Prophet (ﷺ) in Madinah were from the Khazraj. When Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) passed on, there was a bid by the Khazraj to assume his mantle, but they finally acceded to the successorship of Abū Bakr and his administration.

360 Narrated by ‘Abudllāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by Abū Dāwūd.

لما أصاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قريشاً يوم بدر وقدم المدينة جمع اليهود في سوق بني قينقاع فقال يا معشر يهود أسلموا قبل أن يصيبكم مثل ما أصاب قريشاً قالوا يا محمد لا يغرنك من نفسك أنك قاتلت نفراً من قريش كانوا أئمهارة لا يعرفون القتال إنك لو قاتلتنا لعرفت أننا نحن الناس وأنك لم تلق مثلنا فأنزل الله عز وجل في ذلك (قل للذين كفروا ستغلبون)

361 How does a people “sell” God’s guidance? In short, influential people in society accomplish this by intentionally devaluing God’s commands while concurrently favoring status quo bribery and corruption that is rationalized by intellectuals and academics, integrated into the social consciousness by the media, and codified into law by political appointees or representatives. The Yahūd, who have a historical legacy of always being in the vicinity of revelation, know what the truth is. Their proximity to prophecy indicated to them that the final Prophet (ﷺ), the greatest of them all, would pass through Madinah; that is why they were there.

**They unto whom We have vouchsafed revelation aforetime know him [Muhammad] as they know their own children; but, behold, some of them knowingly suppress the truth (2:146).**

They thought the last Prophet (ﷺ) would be one from amongst them, and that he would affirm their preeminent position in society as the inheritors of revelation, regardless of their moral character, commitment to Allah (ﷻ), and social conduct. When they saw that, in fact, the Prophet (ﷺ) was an Arab, they were incredulous at how God could have chosen a prophet from these “lowly,” unlettered Arabians. Moreover, when this Prophet (ﷺ) began to expose their “behind the scenes” war on Allah (ﷻ) in Madinah and throughout history, and when he would not rubber-stamp their transgressions against Allah (ﷻ) and their persecutions of His previous Prophets (ﷺ), they became embittered enemies of Allah (ﷻ), Muhammad (ﷺ), and the committed Muslims for all times to come. God forbid, they should accept this last opportunity and reform their thinking, their rebellion, and their historical opposition to Allah (ﷻ),

...this, because they hate [the very thought of] what Allah has bestowed from on high and thus He causes all their deeds to come to naught! (47:9).

...all this, because they hold this world's life in greater esteem than the life to come, and because Allah does not bestow His guidance upon people who deny the truth (16:107).

They knew that what the Prophet (ﷺ) was saying was right and true, but obeying him would have meant that any respectable social standing would have to be earned through sacrifice and struggle, that dominance entailed a fidelity to Allah's (ﷻ) rules and commands, especially in the areas of social and economic justice. But the Yahūd would have none of this; they wanted to dominate as a birthright, they wanted power and finances so that they could oppress, and hence they were only interested in Allah's (ﷻ) guidance as a means to these ends.

Thus, by putting all manner of obstacles in the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his committed followers, they tried their best in any number of ways to stave off the loss of power in the Madinan society. In comparison to a blissful eternity in the next life, the tranquility and security of being in Allah's (ﷻ) care, and the benefits that accrue from an earthly ambiance of equity and justice, relinquishing a social standing acquired through graft and corruption seems like a small price to pay. However, as dimwitted as that may be, they were — and are even today — willing to make this “trade.” They felt secure in making such a fool's bargain because they believed they will never be called to explain their abominable earthly behaviors on account of their “chosen” status. This is what is meant by “selling” God's guidance for a paltry gain.

362 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 1411AH), p. 176, (originally narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and recorded by Aṭṭiyah).

363 Ibid., pp. 185–186, (originally narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and recorded by Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

364 In 1965, the Second Vatican Council promulgated the *Nostra Aetate* (Latin for *In Our Age*), the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, in which it wrote that while “...the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today.”



365 Robert Lindsay, “We Killed Jesus and We’re Proud of It” (Robert Lindsay website, June 22, 2009).

<http://robertlindsay.wordpress.com/2009/06/22/we-killed-jesus-and-were-proud-of-it/>

366 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1411AH), p. 188.

367 Narrated by al-‘Urs ibn ‘Umayrah al-Kindī and recorded by Abū Dāwūd.

إذا عملت الخطيئة في الأرض كان من شهدها فكرها - وقال مرة: أنكرها - كمن غاب عنها . ومن غاب عنها  
فرضيها . كان كمن شهدها

368 **cardinal sins** – are the capital sins, which show a strong inclination to selfishness, debauchery, sensualism, hedonism, and lasciviousness. Cardinal or capital sins are believed to be vices that lead a person on to other sins. The term “capital” applied to these sins is understood by some to come from the Latin *caput* or *source*. Such vices are, therefore, regarded to be the source of many other sins. Traditionally, the cardinal sins are called the *seven deadly sins*. They are usually enumerated as pride, covetousness (or avarice), lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth/laziness. These seven sins seemed to have been much more emphasized before the European Reformation in the history of Western civilization than they have been since. Cardinal sins endanger a person’s virtue and are the fountainhead of a lifestyle that leads to a multitude of sins.

369 One such Yahūdī legal opinion issued by Qiyāfā, the head of the Sanhedrin at the time of Jesus (ﷺ), justifying for all practical purposes the killing of a prophet of Allah (ﷺ), goes as follows, “It is better for one man to die than for a whole people to perish.”<sup>a</sup>

a ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥabannakah al-Maydānī, *Makāyid Yahūdīyah ‘Abr al-Tārīkh*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Qalam, 1978CE), p. 32.

370 **Manasseh** – king of Judah 692–638BC. He succeeded his father Hezekiah at the age of 12 and is depicted in the Bible as one of the worst Jewish monarchs. He canceled his father’s reforms, reintroduced pagan practices, and so shocked the faithful that the destruction of the Temple was attributed to his wickedness (2 Kings, 21:11–17). Apparently, he was strongly opposed by the loyal monotheists, many of whom he put to death. This Yahūdī king paid tribute to Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal of Assyria and, according to one report, spent some time as a captive in Babylon (2 Chronicles, 33:11–19).

371 **Yahyá** (ﷺ) – known as John the Baptist (ﷺ) in biblical literature, he opposed King Herod's marriage to his brother's wife, Herodias. This opposition was in fulfillment of biblical teachings. Thereafter, Herodias led the campaign against John (ﷺ). She, on Herod's birthday, had her daughter Salome dance seductively for the king who was so pleased with her movements, that he in his drunkenness offered her the fulfillment of any wish. Salome, upon a suggestion from her mother, Herodias, said she wanted John's (ﷺ) head on a plate. John (ﷺ) was, on the Yahūdī king's order, killed; and his head — still bleeding — was offered to Salome on a platter (Matthew, 14:6–8). And this was during the lifetime of Jesus (ﷺ). Some historians say that many other scholars who opposed this dastardly act were also executed by Yahūdī royal decree.

**Titus Flavius Josephus** (37–100CE) – a Jewish historian and hagiographer who recorded Jewish history from the time of Jesus (ﷺ) to the end of the first century. He is considered to be one of the most authentic chroniclers of history for that period. An observant Jew, he believed in what later came to be known as Hellenistic Judaism, a movement that sought to establish the Hebrew-Jewish tradition within the culture, language, and philosophy of ancient Greek culture. The greatest literary contribution of Hellenistic Judaism was the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible from biblical Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek. His most acclaimed historical works were *The Jewish War* (75CE) and *Antiquities of the Jews* (94CE).

372 **Semites** – the native peoples found in southwest Asia. In antiquity they included the Ammonites, Amorites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Canaanites, and Phoenicians; today the most prominent Semitic peoples are the Arabs and the Hebrew Jews.

373 **Gnosticism** – the belief that the material universe was created by an imperfect god, termed the *demiurge*, which is said to have some of the spirit of the Supreme God. The demiurge is sometimes identified with Yahweh in Hebrew tradition, and is contrasted with a superior entity, the Godhead or Supreme God. The nature of the demiurge varies from an embodiment of evil to a benevolence as much as its inadequacy permits. Given that the term *demiurge* comes from Plato's *Timaeus*, it is not surprising that gnosticism is heavily influenced by Hellenistic philosophy, in addition to Judaism and Christianity.

374 **Pharisaic** – refers to the Pharisees, who were first described in great detail by Jewish historian, Titus Flavius Josephus. After Cyrus the Great defeated the Babylonians in 539BCE, he allowed the Jews to migrate back to Judea in 537BCE and build their temple; however he did not allow them to resurrect the Jewish monarchy. Thus the Jewish priests became the immediate and

dominant authority over the Jews; over time this priestly class became known as the Sadducees. Although the priests managed the activities in the Temple, the scribes and sages — later called rabbis (Hebrew for *my lord*) — came to dominate, and thereby become authorities, in the study of the Torah. The Pharisees had their origins in this group of scribes and sages (rabbis). During this time, a council of sages, later called the Sanhedrin codified and canonized the Hebrew Bible (known as the *Tanakh*). Today, Jewish historians generally consider Pharisaic Judaism to be the progenitor of Rabbinic Judaism, that is normative, mainstream Judaism. All mainstream forms of Judaism today consider themselves heirs of Rabbinic Judaism and, ultimately, the Pharisees.

Pharisaic beliefs are primarily devoted to the interpretation of the Jewish Law, and anecdotes about the lives of the sages. The majority of the Talmud and the Mishnah (an authoritative codification of Pharisaic law, compiled by Judah haNasi around 200CE), the most important Rabbinic (Pharisaic) texts, is devoted to non-theological issues, suggesting that the Pharisees emphasized laws over beliefs. The transition from Pharisaic Judaism to Rabbinic Judaism began after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70CE, because this was the only Jewish school of thought that largely survived.

Outside of Jewish history recorded by Jews, the Pharisees are notable for being the prime agitating influence in the Roman/Hebrew persecution of Jesus and John the Baptist (ﷺ). Several New Testament verses refer to the self-righteous nature of the Pharisees, who placed their own man-made rules above the divine guidance being communicated to them by one of God’s prophets, and in this case, by the Messiah (ﷺ) they had been waiting for. Other New Testament verses indicate that Saul of Tarsus (St. Paul) was a Pharisee before he became a Christian. The Yahūdī analog of the Pharisees in Madinah tried to agitate against Muhammad (ﷺ) in the same way, through alliances with the Makkan *mushriks* and the local Madinan *munāfiqs*, but ultimately failed.

375 **Talmud** – Hebrew for *study*; an authoritative, influential compilation of rabbinic traditions and discussions about Jewish life and laws, including worship, diet, social welfare, and especially, purity. After the Mishnah of Rabbi Judah haNasi was compiled (200CE), it became itself an object of study by Jewish scholars in Palestine and Babylon; their commentary on it (the Gemaru), together with the Mishnah, constitutes the Talmud, of which there were two versions: the Palestinian Talmud (4th century BC) and the longer Babylonian Talmud (500CE).

376 Martin Luther (Martin H. Bertram, translator), *On the Jews and the Lies*. (Raleigh, North Carolina: Lulu Publishing, 2009).

377 **Inquisition** – tribunal for the prosecution of heresy, originally of the mediæval Christian Church. Pope Gregory IX (13th century CE) gave special responsibility to papal inquisitors to counter the threat to Christian political and religious unity from Islamic and Jewish believers. The activities of the inquisitors were later characterized by extremes of torture and punishment, most notoriously in the case of the Spanish Inquisition.

378 **Marranos** – Spanish for *swine*; in Hebrew, the word is *anusim*, translated into English as *coerced*. This was a pejorative term applied in Iberia to the descendants of baptized Jews suspected of secret adherence to Judaism. This class became numerous in Spain after the 1391CE massacres and the Dominican campaign led by Vincent Ferrer at the beginning of the 15th century, and was henceforth very prominent socially, economically, and politically. To cope with them, the Inquisition was introduced into Spain in 1480 and began a pitiless campaign of repression, which continued unremittingly after the expulsion of non-Christians from the country in 1492. The Forced Conversion in Portugal in 1497, which converted almost the whole body of Portuguese Jewry into titular but insincere Christians, augmented the number of Marranos; the Inquisition was introduced there in 1540, and Portuguese immigrants formed a principal object of persecution in Spain down to the close of the 18th century.

Meanwhile, in spite of difficulties and prohibitions, fugitive Marranos escaped overseas, to Italy, Muslim North Africa, and especially Ottoman Turkey, where they joined the existing communities; outstanding figures were Gracia Mendes, Joseph Nasi, and Solomon ibn Yaish. In Italy, the main Marrano centers were Ancona, Ferrara, Venice, and Leghorn. A secret Marrano colony established itself in Antwerp in the 16th century when the city was under Spanish rule, but after Holland achieved its independence, the center of immigration shifted to Amsterdam, where from 1600CE the Marranos no longer had to hide; there were subsidiary communities in the Hague, Rotterdam, etc.

In somewhat similar circumstances, communities were organized in Hamburg, Bordeaux, and Bayonne. In England, fugitive Marranos settled in the reign of Henry VIII and seem to have maintained some sort of organized religious life in secret; many left England when Catholicism temporarily triumphed under Queen “Bloody” Mary I (1553), but they reappeared under Queen Elizabeth I. An internal quarrel led to their banishment in 1609, but a fresh settlement began shortly thereafter. Manasseh ben Israel’s mission to England was in great part intended to find a place of refuge for Marrano fugitives from the Inquisition.

In the New World, meanwhile, Marranos had penetrated into all Spanish and Portuguese colonies, but were followed by the Inquisition and at times savagely persecuted. With the occupation of Brazil by the Dutch in the

first half of the 17th century, open communities were founded there, but were uprooted by the Portuguese reconquest. The refugees, recruited before long from the Old World, set up the earliest Jewish communities in the Dutch and English possessions in the West Indies and North America (for example, in New York, 1654; and in Newport, Rhode Island, 1658).

The Marrano communities played a very important part in international commerce, and began by their very numerous publications in Spanish and Portuguese the tradition of a vernacular literature among European Jews. They produced a great number of influential men of distinction in every intellectual field (for example, Baruch Spinoza and Isaac Pereyre). Down to the late 19th century, they continued to be augmented by Spanish and Portuguese immigrants brought up in the secret Marrano tradition. This, however, decayed, and it was long imagined that it had died out, but in 1920, it was discovered that there was still in North Portugal a great number of “New Christians” still conscious of their Jewish descent and maintaining their crypto-Jewish traditions, now hardly recognizable. Under the leadership of Captain A.C. de Barros Basto, a movement was begun to bring them back into touch with Jewish tradition, and a synagogue was established for them in Oporto. Those in Belmonte have started to return to Judaism. The descendants of the former secret Jews of Majorca, locally known as Chuetas, are still a recognizable and despised class, though it is questionable whether most have retained any Jewish tradition.

379 **Cossacks** – originally members of semi-independent communities of fugitive peasants and military adventurers inhabiting the steppes of Southern Russia and Ukraine. Attempts to limit Cossack freedom led to several large-scale rebellions against the Russian government in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 18th and 19th centuries they were formed into military organizations (hosts), and earned a reputation for ferocious fighting and skilled horsemanship.

380 **Hasidic Judaism** – Hebrew for *piety*; according to the Jewish Virtual Library, Hasidism is a movement within Orthodox Judaism, founded by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (1698–1760) in 18th-century Eastern Europe in response to a void felt by many average observant Jews of the day. Rabbi Tov was considered a great scholar and mystic, devoted to both the revealed, outer aspect, and hidden, inner aspect of Torah. He and his followers, without veering from a commitment to the Torah, created a way of Jewish life that emphasized the ability of all Jews to grow closer to God via everything they do, say, and think. In the approach to God Hasidic literature tends to put more emphasis on direct, emotional worship rather than contact with God through the constant study of the Torah and Talmud. This does not mean that Hasidic Jews do not read the Torah and Talmud, but that they empha-

size mystical contact with God that comes through prayer, earning a livelihood, and other physical activities.

With nearly one-half million adherents, there are 30 major Hasidic movements today (and several hundred minor ones), the largest of which (with perhaps 100,000 followers) is the Lubavitch group headquartered in Brooklyn, New York. Today, Hasidic Jews are differentiated from other Orthodox Jews by their devotion to a dynastic leader (referred to as a *Rebbe*), their wearing of distinctive clothing, and a greater than average study of the inner aspects of Torah.

381 **The Enlightenment** – the European intellectual movement that reached its zenith in the 18th century. Enlightenment thinkers were believers in social progress and in the liberating possibilities of rational and scientific knowledge. They were often critical of existing society and were hostile to religion, which they saw as keeping the human mind chained down by superstition. The American and French revolutions were justified by Enlightenment principles of human natural rights. Leading representatives of the Enlightenment were Voltaire, Lessing, and Diderot.

382 **Immanuel Kant** (1724–1804) – philosopher, born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), Germany, where he spent his entire life. He studied at the university, becoming professor of logic and metaphysics in 1770. His early publications were in the natural sciences, particularly astronomy and geophysics, and he published prolifically on a great range of subjects throughout his life. His main work, now a philosophical classic, is the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781), in which he developed his *transcendental* or *critical idealism*, a response to the empiricism of Hume. He set out his views on ethics in the *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 1785) and *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (*Critique of Practical Reason*, 1788), in which he presented the famous *Categorical Imperative* as the supreme principle of morality. In his third and last Critique, the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (*Critique of Judgment*, 1790), he dealt mainly with aesthetics, or judgments of “taste.” He also wrote on politics, and his *Perpetual Peace* (1795) advocates a world system of free states. He exerted tremendous influence on subsequent philosophy, especially the idealism of Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling.



**Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1770–1831) – philosopher, born in Stuttgart, Germany. He was the last and most important of the great German idealist philosophers in the line from Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. He studied theology at Tübingen University, and taught at Bern (1793), Frankfurt

(1796), and Jena (1801–1806, when the university closed after Napoleon's victory at Jena). He was temporarily a newspaper editor at Bamberg, then headmaster of the gymnasium at Nuremberg (1808–1816). His first great work, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*The Phenomenology of the Mind*, 1807), describes how the human mind has progressed from mere consciousness through self-consciousness, reason, spirit, and religion to absolute knowledge. In the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (*Science of Logic*, 1812–1816), he set out his famous dialectical progression which is applied to the evolution of ideas and to historical movements on the largest possible scale. He became professor at Heidelberg in 1816, and produced in 1817 a compendium of his entire system: *Encyclopadie der philosophischen Wissenschaften in Grundrisse* (*Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*). In 1819 he succeeded Fichte as professor in Berlin, and remained there until his death from a cholera epidemic. His later works include the *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (*Philosophy of Right*, 1821), which contains his political philosophy and his philosophy of art and history. He was a system-builder of the most ambitious kind, and though his philosophy is difficult it has been a great influence on such different groups as Marxists, Positivists, British Idealists, and Existentialists.



**Johann Gottlieb Fichte** (1762–1814) – philosopher, born in Rammenau, Germany. He studied at Jena University, becoming an ardent disciple of Kant, though he went on to modify the Kantian system in his *Wissenschaftslehre* (*Theory of Knowledge*, 1785), which looked forward to Hegel's absolute idealism. In his patriotic lectures *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (*Addresses to the German Nation*, 1807–1808), he tried to rouse German nationalism to resist Napoleon I. In 1810, he became the first rector of the University of Berlin, whose constitution he had drawn up.



383 **Sanhedrin** – the word means a *council* or *senate*; a Jewish council of elders meeting in Jerusalem, which during the Graeco-Roman period acquired internal administrative and judicial functions over Palestinian Jews, despite foreign domination. Convened by the high priest, its membership numbered 71, although local courts with this designation outside Jerusalem had fewer members (usually 23 or just 3) and more limited jurisdiction. After the fall of Jerusalem in 70CE, the Jerusalem Sanhedrin was effectively replaced by a new court of sages at Jabneh.

384 **Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield** (1804–1881) – British statesman; son of Isaac D'Israeli. After unsuccessful ventures in business, he made a rep-

utation by his novel, *Vivian Grey* (1826). From 1828–1831, he traveled through the Mediterranean, spending some time in Palestine. On his return to England, he entered politics and after initial failure, was elected to parliament in 1837 as a Tory. Though at first howled down in the House of Commons, he became the spokesman of the inarticulate Protectionist right-wing when the official Conservative Party under Peel went over to Free Trade in 1845. In the course of the next few years, he revived the Party; and became its official parliamentary leader. Meanwhile, he continued his literary career, publishing a series of select political novels.



In 1852, 1859, and 1866–1868, he was chancellor of the exchequer and leader of the House of Commons in Conservative governments, and in 1868 and 1874–1880 served as British Prime Minister. In this capacity, he acquired the deep affection of Queen Victoria (who became Empress of India under his premiership), represented Colonial Britain at the Berlin Congress (1878), dazzled the country with his imperial vision, acquired for England a dominant holding in the Suez Canal Company, introduced social legislation, and saved the Conservative Party in England from reactionary development. In 1878, he was anointed Earl of Beaconsfield.

Throughout his career, he never ceased to proclaim his sympathy with and admiration for the Jewish people, to which he was proud to trace his origin. He championed Jewish emancipation in parliament; almost identified himself with a medieval messianic pretender in his early work *Alroy*; idealized the Rothschild as “Sidonia,” a principal character in his novels *Coningsby* and *Tancred*; spoke of Christianity as a development of Judaism; and ascribed exaggerated qualities to the Jewish race. How a Jew became the prime minister of a colonial power upon which the Sun never set — a power that extended no popular civil rights — can only be attributed to the financial kingdom to which he belonged.

385 **wandering Jew** – a character in Christian legend who taunted Christ as he carried his cross, and was condemned to wander the earth until the end of the world or until Christ’s second coming. Various Jews, notably Ahasuerus of Hamburg in 1602, have been identified with the character, who has been seen as a symbol of the diaspora of the Jewish people.

386 **Alfred Dreyfus** (1859–1935) – a French Jewish army officer, born in Mulhouse, France. An artillery captain on the General Staff, in 1893–1894 he was falsely charged with delivering defense secrets to the Germans. He was court-martialed and transported to Devil’s Island, French Guiana (South America). The efforts of





his wife and friends to prove him innocent provoked a vigorous response from militarists and quarters suspicious of Jewish intrigue, and deeply divided the French intellectual and political world. After the case was tried again (1899), he was found guilty but pardoned, and in 1906 the verdict was reversed. Proof of his innocence came when German military documents were uncovered in 1930.

387 **The Protocols of the Elders of Zion** – also known as *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*; a book that lists procedures for world dominance.<sup>a</sup> This document may be the most controversial piece of literature in recent history. It is said that the *Protocols* first appeared in 1864 in France in a book entitled *Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu* or the *Politics of Machiavellin in the Nineteenth Century by a Contemporary*. In the mid-1890s, the obscure book was rewritten and augmented with anti-Jewish material on orders of the Russian Ochrana, the czar's secret police. It was added to the work of a religious writer named Sergei Nilus and published to coincide with the founding of the first Zionist movement (working on return to Palestine) at the 1897 World Congress of Jewry in Basel, Switzerland. The *Protocols* were included as an appendix to Nilus's book, partially titled *The Anti-Christ is Near at Hand*. It is said by some that the objective was to relieve public pressure on the czar by portraying Russian revolutionaries as pawns of an international Jewish conspiracy. The document argued that a clique of Jews and Freemasons would join forces to create a one-world government by means of liberalism and socialism, an idea that is dismissed as conspiratorial in some quarters.

The *Protocols* still chill readers with their prophetic description of the methodology for tyranny by a few. Its message fits quite well with the elitist outlook of men like Cecil Rhodes and the Rothschilds. Among other things, the *Protocols* state,

We are the chosen, we are the only true men. Our minds give off the true power of the spirit; the intelligence of the rest of the world is merely instinctive and animal. They can see, but they cannot foresee; their inventions are merely corporeal. Does it not follow that nature herself has predestined us to dominate the whole world?

Outwardly, however, in our "official" utterances, we shall adopt an opposite procedure, and always do our best to appear honorable and cooperative. A statesman's words do not have to agree with his acts. If we pursue these principles, the governments and peoples which we have thus prepared will take our IOUs for cash. One day they will accept us as benefactors and saviors of the human race. If any State dared to resist us, if its neighbors make common cause with it against us, we will unleash a world war.

The *Protocols* go on to explain that the goal of world domination will be accomplished by controlling how the public thinks through supervision of what they hear; by creating new conflicts or restoring old orders; by spreading hunger, destitution, and plague; and by seducing and distracting the youth. "By all these methods we shall so wear down the nations that they will be forced to offer us world domination," they proclaim. Some of the 24 *Protocols* bear a brief summary. If any part of them are to be believed, they indicate a clear connection to Freemasonry and to the Ancient Mysteries, as well as an amazing road map for world conquest. Because the *Protocols* were rewritten and attributed to Jews before WWI with the intent of inciting anti-Jewish sentiment, their use of the term *goyim*, a pejorative Jewish word for non-Jews, has been substituted with the term *masses*. Pertinent points include:

...[the *Protocol* plan] will remain invisible until the moment when it has gained such strength that no cunning can any longer undermine it (Protocol 1).

Wars, so far as possible [between nations], should not result in territorial gains (Protocol 2).

[The] minds [of the masses] must be diverted toward industry and trade. Thus, all the nations will be swallowed up in the pursuit of gain and... will not take note of their common foe (Protocol 4).

We [the Jews] shall create an intensified centralization of government... (Protocol 5).

...we must develop [a] super-government by representing it as the Protector and Benefactor of all those who voluntarily submit... We shall soon begin to establish huge monopolies... (Protocol 6).

The intensification of armaments, the increase of police forces... [so that] in all the States of the world, besides ourselves, [there will be] only the masses of the proletariat, a few millionaires devoted to our interests, police, and soldiers (Protocol 7).

We shall put [government power] in the hands of persons whose past and reputations are such that between them and the people lies an abyss, persons who, in case of disobedience to our instructions, must face criminal charges... (Protocol 8).

We have fooled, bemused and corrupted the youth of the [masses] by rearing them in principles and theories which are known to us to be false... (Protocol 9).

We shall destroy among the [masses] the importance of the family and its educational value (Protocol 10).

We have invented this whole policy and insinuated it into the minds of the [masses]... to obtaining in a roundabout way what is... unattainable by the direct road... It is this which has served as the basis for our organization of secret masonry which is not known to, and [whose] aims... are not even so much as suspected by these... cattle, attracted by us into the "Show" army of Masonic Lodges in order to throw dust in the eyes of their fellows (Protocol 11).

What is the part played by the press today? It serves selfish ends... It is often rapid, unjust, mendacious and the majority of the public have not the slightest idea what ends the press really serves. We shall saddle and bridle it with a tight curb... Not a single announcement will reach the public without our control... (Protocol 12).

The need for daily bread forces the [masses] to keep silent and be our humble servants... In order that the masses themselves may not guess what they are about we further distract them with amusements, games, pastimes, passions, people's palace [no TV at that time]. Soon we shall begin through the media to propose competitions in art, in sport of all kinds... (Protocol 13).

It will be undesirable for us that there should exist any other religion than ours... We must therefore sweep away all other forms of belief (Protocol 14).

When we at last definitely come into our kingdom by the aid of coups d'état prepared everywhere for one and the same day... we shall make it our task to see that against us such things as plots shall no longer exist. With this purpose we shall slay without mercy all who take arms in hand to oppose our coming... Anything like a secret society will also be punishable with death... (Protocol 15).

Freedom of conscience has been declared everywhere, so that now only hours divide us from the moment of the complete wrecking of that Christian religion, as to other religions we shall have still less difficulty in dealing with them (Protocol 17).

In our program one-third of [the masses] will keep the rest under observation from a sense of duty, on the principle of volunteer serv-

ice to the State. It will be no disgrace to be a spy and informer, but a merit... how else [are] we to... increase... disorders? (Protocol 17).

Until [dissenters] commit some overt act we shall not lay a finger on them but only introduce into their midst observation elements (Protocol 18).

Sedition-mongering is nothing more than the yapping of a lap-dog at an elephant... In order to destroy the prestige of heroism, for political crime we shall send it for trial in the category of thieving, murder, and every kind of abominable and filthy crime. Public opinion will then... brand it with the same contempt (Protocol 19).

Later protocols deal with finances. Protocol 20 calls for general taxation, “the lawful confiscation of all sums... for the regulation of their circulation in the State.” This would be followed by “progressive tax on property” and then finally a graduated income tax, a “tax increasing in a percentage ratio to capital” as well as taxes on sales, “receipt of money,” inheritance, and property transfers. There was a discussion of “the substitution of interest-[usury]-bearing paper” for money since “Economic crises have been produced by us... by no other means than the withdrawal of money from circulation.” The *Protocols* also discuss at great length loans, which they state “hang like a Sword of Damocles over the heads of rulers, who, instead of taking from their subjects by a temporary tax, come begging with outstretched palm to our bankers.”

Whoever produced the *Protocols* clearly understood the secrets of banking. In a passage which could have been titled “The National Debt of the Untied States,” Protocol 20 states, “A loan is an issue of government bills of exchange containing a percentage obligation [usury] commensurate to the sum of the loaned capital.” It proceeds to explain, “If the loan bears a charge of 5% [hefty usury in those more knowledgeable times] then in 20 years the State vainly pays away in usury a sum equal to the loan borrowed, in 40 years it is paying a double sum, in 60 — treble [triple], and all the while the debt remains unpaid...” And in the prophetic words of the *Protocols* no one would figure out what was happening. “We shall so hedge about our system of accounting that neither ruler nor the most insignificant public servant will be in a position to divert even the smallest sum from its destination without detection or to direct it in another direction...” The *Protocols* also demonstrate a linkage to the Ancient Mysteries, referring to bloodlines such as “the seed of David,” “secret mysteries,” and the “Symbolic Snake,” an icon of the earliest cults.

Despite their problematic origin, the *Protocols* were taken seriously by many powerful people, including Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm II, Russia’s Czar Nicholas II, and American industrialist Henry Ford, who used them to help persuade the US Senate not to join President Wilson’s League of Nations.

Hitler saw the *Protocols* as a real proclamation despite the questions that have besieged the book. In *Mein Kampf* he wrote,

They [the *Protocols*] are supposed to be a “forgery” the *Frankfurter Zeitung* moans and cries out to the world once a week; the best proof that they are genuine after all... But the best criticism applied to them is reality. He who examines the historical development of the past hundred years, from the points of view of this book [the *Protocols*], will also immediately understand the clamor of the Jewish press. For once this book has become the common property of a people, the Jewish danger is bound to be considered as broken.<sup>b</sup>

Author Konrad Heiden, an anti-Nazi contemporary of Hitler, while denying the authenticity of the *Protocols*, also saw a certain reality there,

Today the forgery is incontrovertibly proved, yet something infinitely significant has remained: a textbook of world domination... the great principle of inequality fights to preserve its rule; the ruling class philosophy of a natural hierarchy, of innate differences between men. Once this principle is expressed in the form of historical events, it also soon assumes the aspect of conspiracy... The spirit of the *Protocols*, therefore, contains historical truth, though all the facts put forward in them are forgeries.<sup>c</sup>

It is the possibility of “historical truth” which has kept the *Protocols* in circulation since their inception. Today, modern conspiracy writers see them as the real program predating Nazism and communism. Some have noticed a remarkable resemblance between the *Protocols* and confiscated secret documents of the mysterious Bavarian Illuminati of the late 18th century. Others noted that the original Nilus edition contained references to a king as well as a “Masonic kingdom,” concepts clearly not of Jewish origin. Furthermore, it concluded with the statement, “Signed by the representatives of Zion of the 33rd degree.”

- a The Elders of Zion (Victor E. Marsden, translator), *The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion*. (Boring, Oregon: CPA Book Publisher, 2009).
- b Adolf Hitler (James Murphy, translator), *Mein Kampf*. (New York, New York: Hurst and Blackett, Ltd., 1939), p. 255.
- c Konrad Heiden (Ralph Manheim, translator), *The Führer*. (New York, New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1994), p. 16.

388 Adolf Hitler (James Murphy, translator), *Mein Kampf*. (New York, New York: Hurst and Blackett, Ltd., 1939), p. 53

389 The alarm bells have already begun to ring in Washington and New York after the 2008 financial meltdown on Wall Street, resulting in a \$700 billion bailout by the US taxpayer; writing in *The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, Ben Harris cites the following,

“There is definitely a fear among certain Jews in this industry,” said a Jewish employee with a top New York investment bank who asked that his name be withheld. “And it’s because it’s spreading past Wall Street now. There’s a growing animosity towards the wealthy, and especially the wealthy that have made money on Wall Street and real estate and finance, as so many Jews have — some legitimately, some not so. It’s very easy to generalize that it must be the entire Jewish people.”

Last week, the ADL [Anti-Defamation League] reported a “dramatic surge” in anti-Semitic Internet postings related to the economy. The group said the Internet chatter is not limited to neo-Nazi and white supremacist sites, but has spread to mainstream Web sites such as Yahoo! and AOL, where “hundreds” of anti-Semitic messages have flooded financial discussion boards.<sup>a</sup>

- a Ben Harris, *Will Wall St. crisis spur anti-Semitism? Some Jews find cause for anxiety*. (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle, National News section, October 7, 2008).  
[http://www.jewishchronicle.org/article.php?article\\_id=10692](http://www.jewishchronicle.org/article.php?article_id=10692)

390 **jinn** – an intelligent form of life parallel to humans. The two major components of jinn are air and fire; while in humans the two major components are water and earth. The life sustaining proportionality of air and fire is called the *mārij*. Out of this *mārij* Allah (ﷻ) gave life to jinn. Thus, the jinn are as resilient and flexible as to assume any shape they want including a flame feature. Spirits that dwell in modes of light (angels) or fire (jinn) have been concealed from human senses. That is why the literal meaning of the Arabic word jinn is a concealed or unseen being.

**ins** – usually translated as *humans*, the word means intelligent beings who are characterized by their psychosocial nature that fluctuates between acculturation and naturalness (or between assimilation and ignorance), peculiar to human senses and physical constitution.

391 Narrated by Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and recorded by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī,

al-Tirmidhī, and al-Ṭabarānī.

إنما القبر روضة من رياض الجنة أو حفرة من حفر النار

392 Narrated by al-Mustawrad ibn Shidād and recorded by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Muslim, Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, and Ibn Mājah.

والله ما الدنيا في الآخرة إلا مثل ما يجعل أحدكم إصبعه في اليم . فلينظر يم يرجع

393 The inevitability of death raises ethical problems concerning how we ought to live our lives. This would hold true whether there is or is not a possibility that at death we will be held responsible for our actions. The denial of an afterlife and thus the denial of rewards and punishments for our behavior during this life does not solve ethical problems. Abortion in the secular mind is still a controversial question regardless of one's position concerning immortality, as is euthanasia. The morality of the death penalty is debated, especially in the US, which seems to be opposing a worldwide trend in the reinstatement of this punishment.

The contemplation or awareness of our own death has been discussed not only by recent philosophers such as Heidegger and Sartre but throughout the history of thought. According to some thinkers the inevitability of death gives our life meaning, while others have held that death makes life meaningless or absurd. Philosophers have also asked whether we can experience our own death and how we experience the death of the "other."

In recent times we have been forced to redefine the moment of death. No longer can we simply say a person is dead when his or her heart stops, for there are now machines that can perform the physiological functions of the heart. At present, in the US, death is described in terms of the absence of brain waves. In the UK, the criterion of brain stem death is used instead. The development of sophisticated technology has also raised a number of ethical issues in secular societies since not only is it now possible to save the lives of people who in the past would have died, but in some cases technology has allowed people to continue to live in a comatose state for months and even years. Karen Ann Quinlan lived for months on life-support systems and then survived for another nine years in a coma being fed artificially. Another case receiving attention concerned an attempt in Germany to keep a brain-dead pregnant woman alive in the hope that she would be able to give birth to a healthy child.

So far, all the problems we have discussed involve human death, but if philosophy involves drawing lines and discussing the nature and boundaries of concepts, one must ask why we limit the notion of death to our own death since it is quite clear that animals are living things. With the development of ethology, many people have asked if animals, like humans, have

an awareness of death. For instance, elephants have been observed burying dead elephants: they cover them with soil and branches. They “fondle and examine” the bones and tusks of dead elephants. It has also been observed that elephants will walk on either side of a wounded or sick elephant as if to support him; bulls have been seen lifting and carrying off another wounded bull. Do they, perhaps, realize that the sheer weight of a fallen elephant can quickly cause his lungs to collapse and thus cause death? Do they have an awareness of death? The same question can be asked not only of dolphins since they have been known to support the body of a sick dolphin or even a drowning person, but also about those trained chimpanzees that can distinguish between photographs of animate and inanimate objects. Do they have some conception of life and thus of death? There is experimental evidence to suggest that chimpanzees have the ability to recognize themselves in a mirror. Does such an ability mean that they are self-conscious and does this in turn mean that they might have a sense of their own end or death?

Is inorganic nature (lacking the properties and characteristics of living organisms) something utterly different from, and alien to, humans? If yes, that would mean that humans are cut off from nature, which would have us suffer from a type of troublesome dualism. Perhaps we can understand this continuum if we consider the physical nature of a human being for, although we tend to forget it, we can describe ourselves in purely physical terms as being two-thirds water, which in turn is made up of hydrogen and oxygen, which is made up of atoms composed of electrons and protons and so on. Thus, human physical death can be described not only in terms of emotions and experiences, but also in terms of disease, in terms of cells, the exchange of chemicals through cell membranes, and so on. This does not mean that as physical beings we are reduced to nothing more than the action of our physical components. Rather, as physical beings we are linked to inorganic nature although we are not reduced to it.

It is perhaps much easier to compare human death to death in the organic world for in the death of animals, at least the so-called higher animals, we can recognize certain similarities with our own ageing and death. Many of us have watched a familiar and domestic animal grow old: a dog’s muzzle will turn white just as human hair does. The ageing animal is less playful, less active, and so on. Even the process of dying is similar: a home-grown cat gets breast cancer and dies as the disease progresses.

Death is all around us — but we manage to block it out of our conscience, at least in the materialistic and secular worlds. In the Old and the New Testaments, the end of physical life on earth is the separation of the soul from the body. Early Hebrew religion gave little thought to death, accepting it as a part of life, and it gave scant attention to life after death. In the way information has come down through the annals of biblical history, a gradual belief devel-



oped that the departed soul went to Sheol (the Hebrew underworld, the abode of the dead) or Hades (Psalms, 88:12; 86:13; Proverbs, 15:24), where the soul barely existed as a shadow. Death was considered to be the end-result of sin (Genesis, 3:19, 22). Not until very late in Hebrew history — at the time the Book of Daniel was written, about 350BCE — did belief in the resurrection of the dead arise. Before Ezekiel and Daniel (ﷺ), there was little, if any, belief in personal immortality. Rather, the nation of Israel, was seen as immortal, as it continued from generation to generation. Many scholars believe such passages, which sound personal (Hosea, 6:1–3), probably refer to the whole people of Israel. Such a reading follows from the Hebrew belief that human beings are animated bodies, not incarnate souls, as in Greek thought.

In the New Testament, death is closely identified with sin (Romans, 5:12). Death, like sin, law, and the devil, is a hostile power. These demonic powers were the ones that Jesus (ﷺ) struggled to overcome in his proclamation of the Kingdom, and triumphed over in his death and “resurrection.” St. Paul puts it clearly, that for those with faith in Jesus Christ, death no longer has any power to terrify or destroy (Romans, 6–9; 1 Corinthians, 15). People die physically; but spiritually believers have eternal life, so that alive or dead they cannot fall out of the hand of God.

394 The world and life on earth are transient and sensual pursuits that are for the most part hollow. Earthly life is tantalizing and seductive. The emotional attachment to it may become an elaborate and complex way of life. Drowning in moments of sensual desires may eclipse and even extinguish the fact of an impending afterlife. A human being who is unable to consciously ascertain and to mentally affirm that earthly life is transitory, and that he will eventually leave the world without any material or physical possessions will have been consumed by its seductive features.

The world we are approaching and the eternal life to come are worth concentrating on. The moment of death is unavoidable. And when a person reaches that parting moment in life he should be reminded to say, “*lā ilāha illā allāh*: There is no divinity/authority except Allah.” These should be the last words a person utters on his way out of this temporal life. It is also judicious to read *Sūrah Yāsīn*, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*Recite Yāsīn to your deceased,*”<sup>a</sup> and “*Any deceased who has Yāsīn recited for him will be eased through the process of dying.*”<sup>b</sup>

a Recorded by Abū Dāwūd.

b Narrated by Umm al-Dardā’ and recorded by al-Ājurri.

395 Joel Stein, *How Jewish is Hollywood?* (Los Angeles, California: Los Angeles Times, Opinion Section, December 19, 2008).

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-stein19-2008dec19,0,4676183.column>

**Hollywood** – a suburb of Los Angeles, California, which after 1912 developed into the center of film production in the USA. Its studios dominated the world motion picture market from the 1920s, and it is still a major center for the production of visual entertainment in both film and television.

396 Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*. (New York, New York: Bantam Doubleday Publishing, 1988).

397 Ibid., p. 2.

398 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 198, (originally recorded in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs).

399 Narrated by Ṭālaq ibn 'Alī al-Ḥanafī and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, al-Nisā'ī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, al-Tirmidhī, and al-Ḥākim.

من سئل عن علم فكتمه أجم يوم القيامة بلجام من نار

400 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 200.

401 Narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah and recorded by al-Wādi'ī (cited in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*).

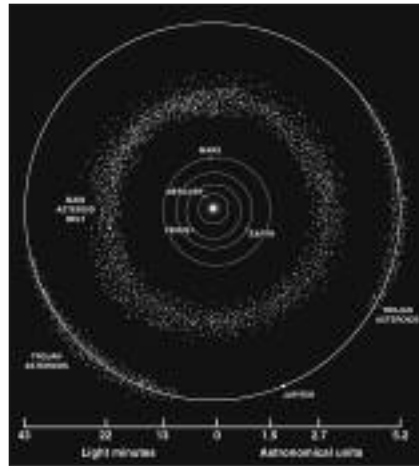
دخلت أنا وعبيد بن عمير على عائشة فقالت لعبيد بن عمير: قد آن لك أن تزورنا؟ فقال: أقول يا أمة كما قال الأول زر غبا تزدد حبا قال فقالت: دعونا من رطانتكم هذه قال ابن عمير: أخبرينا بأعجب شيء رأيته من رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وسلم - قال: فسكتت ثم قالت: لما كان ليلة من الليالي قال يا عائشة: ذرني أتعبد الليلة لربي قلت: والله إنني لأحب قريب وأحب ما سرك قالت: فقام فتطهر ثم قام يصلي قالت: فلم يزل يبكي حتى بل حجره قالت: ثم بكى فلم يزل يبكي حتى بل لحيته قالت: ثم بكى فلم يزل يبكي حتى بل الأرض فجاء بلال يؤذنه بالصلاة فلما رآه يبكي قال: يا رسول الله لم تبكي وقد غفر الله لك ما تقدم وما تأخر؟ قال: أفلا أكون عبدا شكورا لقد نزلت علي الليلة آية وبل لمن قرأها ولم يتفكرها فيها: (إن في خلق السماوات والأرض الآية كلها).

402 **asteroids** – rocky objects generally found in orbits lying between those of Mars and Jupiter, formerly called *minor planets*, a term now rarely used. This main belt of asteroids has its inner edge approximately 60 million miles (100 million km) outside Mars' orbit, and is 100 million miles (165 million km) wide. Only a few are large enough to have visible discs (hence the name, meaning *star-like*), so most sizes are inferred. The orbits of the 5,000 or so of the larger asteroids are known. The first asteroid, Ceres (diameter 940 km/580 miles) was

discovered by Giuseppe Piazzi (1746–1826) in 1801, and has an orbital period (one revolution around the Sun) of 4.6 years. Other large asteroids are Pallas (590 km/370 miles), Vesta (580 km/360 miles), Hygiea (430 km/270 miles), Interamnia (340 km/210 miles) Davida (320 km/200 miles) and Cybele (310 km/190 miles).

Asteroids are classified according to telescopically measured, visible, and near-infrared colors, inferences about their composition being based on a comparison with meteorite types. C types are thought to be analogous to carbonaceous meteorites; S types are thought to be composed of silicates mixed with nickel and iron; and M types are thought to be mostly metallic (nickel/iron). There are also several unclassified asteroids.

They are believed to have originated in the formation of the Solar System, when planetesimals (small bodies that could or did come together with many others under gravitation to form a planet) accreted from solar nebula. The more primitive carbonaceous asteroids may have evolved little since then, while the other types may have been parts of larger bodies first accreted and later broken up by collisions. Recently a few dozen small asteroids, a few kilometers in diameter, have been discovered in highly elliptical orbits that come inside the orbit of Mars, some crossing the orbit of Earth — the Apollo, Amor, and Aten families. The total number of near-Earth asteroids is thought to be over 1,000; these, and the larger number of unseen boulder-size objects, may collide with the Earth and the Moon periodically. Such asteroids are relatively easy to visit by spacecraft, and may in the future represent economically useful resources for an expanding space economy. The first flyby of a main-belt asteroid, Gaspra, was achieved by the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Galileo spacecraft, on its way to Jupiter, in October 1991.



**comet** – small Solar System body made of ice and dust. Comets are asteroidal in appearance at distances of many astronomical units (1 astronomical unit = 149,597,871 km or 92,955,807 miles) from the Sun, when they consist of a bare, inactive nucleus; however, they are often spectacularly active when nearer to the Sun. The characteristic bright head, or *coma*, and streaming tails made up of dust and ions are created by solar heating, which causes sublimation of the ices (and entrainment of the dust) with

subsequent solar-induced emission of light from gas molecules and scattered light from the dust.

The source of comets is believed to be a spherical halo cloud about the Sun called the Oort Cloud — representing a region into which cometary planetesimals were scattered gravitationally after their formation about 4.6 billion years ago. Oort Cloud comets are loosely bound in a solar orbit at distances of approximately 50,000 astro-



nomical units. Observable comets are occasionally scattered into the inner Solar System by the gravitational fields of nearby stars and giant molecular clouds. Most can be observed only once because of their long rotational period of about a million years; some like **Halley's Comet** are captured into relatively short period orbits as a result of gravitational interactions with giant planets. There are about 50 known periodic comets in the “Jupiter” family whose *aphelion* (the point in the orbit of a planet or comet that is at the greatest distance from the Sun) distance is near Jupiter's. These are potential targets for spacecraft missions, especially in view of the assertion that they represent the most primitive material, dating back to the origin of the Solar System.

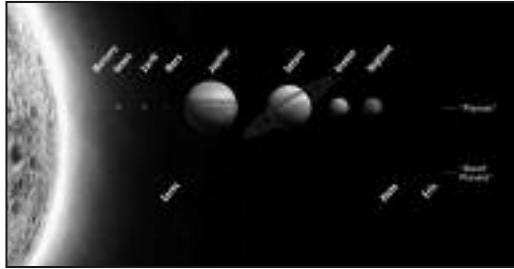
From spacecraft and telescopic measurement it is now known that the comet nucleus is a few kilometers in size, irregularly shaped and very dark; that the dust in the coma contains carbon and silicate; that there is evidence of polymerized organic molecules; and that the gases of the coma include water, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, ammonia, methane, and hydrocarbons, sustaining the *dirty snowball* hypothesis. Cometary impacts on Earth over geologic time may have been an important source of volatile material and organic compounds contributing to the pre-biotic environment. Cometary and asteroidal impacts may also have contributed to periodic extinctions of species in the past.

**interplanetary matter** – material in the Solar System other than the planets and their satellites. It includes streams of charged particles from the solar wind, dust, meteorites, and comets.

403 The basic distinction between a star and a planet is that a star generates its own heat and light, through nuclear reactions, whereas a planet shines only due to reflected light. The theory of planetary formation suggests that they condense from material left over during primary star formation. Their occurrence therefore may be common, but they are extremely hard to detect, being so much fainter than their parent stars. The major planets in

the **Solar System** comprise two types: the inner, terrestrial planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars) and the giant gaseous outer planets (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune), together with unique, distant Pluto (not considered a planet any more).

All except Mercury and Venus have associated moons or, for the outer planets, systems of moons. All are said to have been formed about 4.6 billion years ago, soon after the formation of the Sun from a collapsing cloud of gas



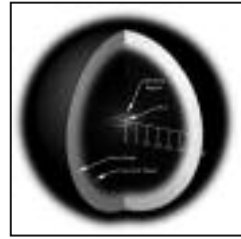
and dust. The inner planets are dense, and made primarily of metals and of metal silicates. They are internally differentiated into zones: an iron-rich core, an iron-magnesium silicate mantle, and a crust of lighter metal silicates. Venus, Earth, and Mars have atmospheres believed to be outgassed from the interiors over geological time. The outer planets are much less dense, and made primarily of gases and ices together with a core equivalent to a large terrestrial planet. They are also internally differentiated into zones: an outer core of hydrogen in a solid phase, a mantle of liquid hydrogen/helium, and a deep gaseous atmosphere. Jupiter is by far the most massive planet, containing over two-thirds of the material in the Solar System apart from the Sun. Many searches have been made for other planets in our Solar System; if they exist. And there is increasing astronomical information that they may very well exist.

**Pluto** – since its discovery in 1930, it was considered the Solar System’s ninth planet; however recently, in 2006, it has been reclassified as the second largest *dwarf planet* after Eris. It is the most massive member of the Kuiper Belt, a region of the Solar System that extends 20 astronomical units beyond the orbit of Neptune and consists of small remnants from the formation of the Solar System. The current International Astronomical

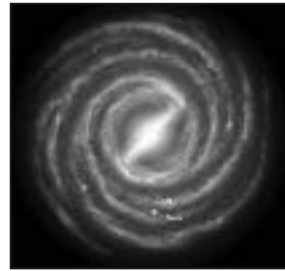


Union’s (IAU) definition of a planet indicates that for a body to be classified as a planet, it must meet three criteria: (1) the object must be in orbit around the Sun; (2) the object must be massive enough to be a sphere by its own gravitational force and more specifically, its own gravity should pull it into a shape of hydrostatic equilibrium; and (3) the object must have cleared the neighborhood around its orbit. Pluto qualifies under the first two conditions, but fails to meet the third.

404 **Oort Cloud** – a spherical *halo* about the Sun, hypothesized to be a source of the long-period comets; named after Dutch astronomer Jan Hendrik Oort (1900–1992), who first noted the clustering of aphelia (plural of *aphelion*) of new comets in this region. It is at the boundary of the Sun’s gravitational sphere of influence, about a third of the distance to the nearest star.

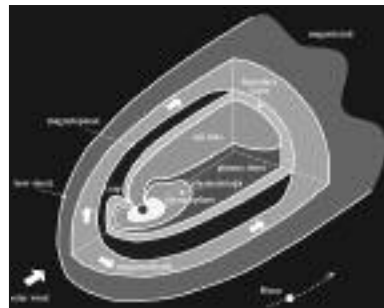


405 **Milky Way** – diffuse band of light across the sky, first resolved by Galileo into a “congeries of stars” resulting from the combined light of thousands of millions of faint stars in our galaxy. Strictly it means the belt of light seen in the night sky, but the term is used freely, even by professional astronomers, as the name of the galaxy to which the Sun belongs. The name, from ancient Greek, was adopted also by the Romans. One of hundreds of billions of galaxies in the observable universe, the Milky Way itself is said to contain between 200 to 400 billion stars like the Sun; it is approximately 100,000 light years in diameter and 1,000 light years thick. If the scale of the Milky Way was reduced to 100 meters in diameter, than our own Solar System including the Oort Cloud would be no more than a grain of sand. The age of the Milky Way is estimated to be around 13.2 billion years, almost as old as the Universe.



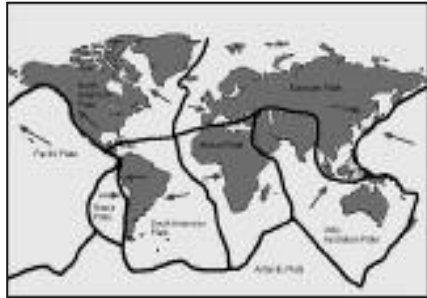
406 **star clusters** – loosely packed, *open clusters* in a galactic plane contain a few dozen to a few hundred stars and are young in age compared to other clusters. Dense, *globular clusters* are found scattered in a halo around galaxies. They are spherical, have hundreds of thousands to millions of stars, and are billions of years old. Formed at the same time early in the history of the Milky Way, over 100 globular clusters are known to exist in it.

407 **magnetosphere** – a teardrop-shaped region whose size and shape are constantly readjusting to the variations of the solar wind (the figure shows a 3-dimensional cutout of Earth’s magnetosphere). Charged particles from both solar wind and the Earth’s atmosphere are stored in the terrestrial magnetosphere, which has been extensively explored since the Van Allen radiation



belts were discovered by Explorer 1 in 1958. Stored particles are periodically ejected into the north and south regions of the atmosphere along the magnetic field and accelerated to high speeds by mechanisms which are poorly understood. Collisions with atmospheric atoms cause emissions of light seen as an *aurora* or the so-called *northern lights*. Other planets known to have magnetospheres include Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Mercury.

408 **plate tectonics theory** – proposes that the Earth’s lithosphere (part of the Earth, consisting of the crust and the solid outer-most layer of the upper mantle, extending to a depth of around 100 kilometers or 60 miles) is made up of a number of relatively thin, rigid plates which may include both continental and ocean crust and



which move relative to one another (the figure shows the major plates delineated by the theory). Plate boundaries are defined by major earthquake zones and belts of volcanic activity. New plate material is generated by erupting basaltic lava along mid-ocean ridges and eventually consumed at subduction zones at the site of deep ocean trenches. Plate collisions have resulted in the formation of mountain ranges such as the Alps and Himalayas. Plate motion is most probably driven by convection currents within the mantle on which the plates float.

409 **greenhouse effect** – solar energy arrives at the planetary surface mainly as visible light from the Sun, which is then reflected by the Earth’s surface at infrared wavelengths as heat. Carbon dioxide and water vapor in the atmosphere absorb this infrared radiation and behave like a blanket, with the net effect of rising atmospheric temperatures. On Earth, the burning of fossil fuels and large-scale deforestation enhance the effect, so that there is likely



to be a gradual increase in mean air temperature by several degrees, with the consequent melting of polar ice and a rise in mean sea level.

Experimental models predict global temperature increases of between 1 and 5 °C by 2050, but there are many uncertainties about possible effects. It is also likely that global rainfall patterns will shift away from the sub-tropical

areas toward higher latitudes, thereby disrupting present agricultural patterns. The energy balance between incoming solar radiation and outgoing radiation (both heat and reflected sunlight) takes place at the top of the atmosphere. For Earth, the warming effect is about 35 °C at the surface; for Venus, in spite of reflective cloud cover, surface temperatures of over 400 °C are reached. It is postulated that early Venus had oceans that were warmed by a carbon dioxide greenhouse effect, leading to the evaporation of water which, in turn, amplified warming and produced a runaway greenhouse effect resulting in the total loss of surface liquid water; this evaporating water was ultimately lost to space altogether.

410 **Albert Einstein** – refer to endnote 173 in Volume 2.

411 **celestial equator** – the great circle in which the plane of the Earth's equator cuts the celestial sphere. This is the primary circle for the coordinates' right ascension and declination.

412 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 207, (narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn Salām and recorded by al-Iṣfahānī).

تفكروا في الخلق ولا تفكروا في الخالق فإنكم لا تقدرون الله قدره.

413 **Al-Najāshī (Negus) of Abyssinia** – refer to endnote 83 in Volume 2.

414 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī'ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 4. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āshir, 1411AH), p. 213–214, (narrated by Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh and 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, and recorded by al-Nisā'ī).

415 Narrated by Sahl ibn Sa'd al-Sā'idī and recorded by Imam al-Bukhārī.

رباط يوم في سبيل الله خير من الدنيا وما فيها...

416 Narrated by Salmān al-Fārsī and recorded by Imam Muslim.

رباط يوم وليلة خير من صيام شهر وقيامه. وإن مات. جرى عليه عمله الذي كان يعمل. وأجرى عليه رزقه. وأمن الفتان



# Glossary

***adhān*** – the call to *ṣalāh*.

**Ahl al-Kitāb** – *Folks of the Book (also People of the Book)*; this expression refers to people who belong or belonged to any of a number of holy books or scriptures that were revealed by Allah (ﷻ) to the Prophets (ﷺ) throughout the course of history. Most notably among them are “Jews” and “Christians” who still have an affinity with or a “working relationship” with the Bible — Old or New Testaments.

***aḥzāb*** – *regional confederation of military forces*; usually refers to the alliance of *mushrik* armies that surrounded Madinah during the Battle of al-Khandaq (the Trench), otherwise known as the Campaign of al-Aḥzāb.

***ākhirah*** – *the end-life or afterlife*; this expression refers to the hereafter, or afterlife, or life after death. In a more refined sense, this word alludes to the time-period that will follow the Day of Resurrection and Judgment.

**āl** – intimates, confidantes.

**‘alim** – learned person, intellectual, expert; this expression usually refers to scholars, particularly scholars who are well versed on Islamic matters.

**amīr** – the final decision maker of a certain constituency, association, or group that aims to achieve a certain set of strategic objectives; in today’s world, the position would be similar to a chief executive officer of a major corporation or a president of a country.

**amit** – I suffer or face the pain of death; the word the Muslims were chanting in order to stiffen their resolve right before the engagement at the Battle of Uḥud.

**amr** – matters of policy, strategy, and public interest on which a public point of view or “vote” is solicited; this word has to be understood in context. It could refer to a command issued by a person or group in charge, or it could refer to issues of importance in the public space in which a joint consensus is sought.

**Anṣār** – supporters; in Islamic literature this word has to be understood in context. It could occur in reference to the Almighty or it could be in reference to the Prophet (ﷺ).

**āyah** – demonstration; this could refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) demonstration through revelation, that is, the verse(s) of the Generous Qur’an; and it can also refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) demonstration of power and authority in the course of prophetic and social history. Plural for āyah is āyāt.

**bāṭil** – falsehood, lies, misrepresentation, institutional corruption; the opposite of ḥaqq.

**bay‘ah** – allegiance.

**Dhū al-Qa‘dah** – *the eleventh month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; it is also one of the four months in which al-ladhīna āmanū are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.*

**dīn** – *pattern and prototype; this word is probably one of the most mistranslated words. The usual translation of the word is religion. But in a better understanding of Islamic terms the word dīn should carry within its meaning a lively prototype and a social system. As such a dīn could be man-made and in denial of Allah (ﷻ) or it may be in conformity with Allah (ﷻ) and in affirmation of Him.*

**du‘ā’** – *prayer or a reverent petition to Allah (ﷻ).*

**du‘ā’ qunūṭ** – *a petition to Allah (ﷻ) to alleviate the times and circumstances of despair and desperation.*

**dunyā** – *the worldly life.*

**fajr** – *break of the day, the first light of day; this is when obedient Muslims offer their dawn ṣalāh.*

**Fajr Ṣalāh** – *a congregational ṣalāh performed by Muslims, one of five during the day, some time between the break of dawn and sunrise.*

**faqīh** – *savant, academician; one who specializes, in particular, in matters that are jurisprudential.*

**fi sabilillāh** – *on a course to Allah (ﷻ); for the cause of Allah (ﷻ).*

**fiqh** – *practical knowledge, legal knowledge, jurisprudence; the moral and legal understanding and interpretation of Islamic norms and laws within a particular generation or set of circumstances.*

**fiqhī** – *of or pertaining to fiqh.*

**ghanīmah** – *the spoils of war.*

**ghayb** – *unseen, unknown, metaphysical, incomprehensible.*

**hadith** – *a verbal or practical precedent of the Prophet (ﷺ); the simple linguistic meaning of the word is “speech.”*

**al-Hadith** – *the full body of hadith literature of the Prophet (ﷺ).*

**hadith, muttafaq** – *a hadith whose text and chain of transmission are agreed upon by all the major compilers of the Hadith.*

**Hajj** – *the Pilgrimage; this is the annual meeting of the Muslims in Makkah during the last three months of the lunar year: Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa‘daḥ, and Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ. The mass assembly of people during this annual congregation is Yawm ‘Arafāt, which is the 9th day of Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ — the day before ‘Īd al-Aḍḥá.*

**ḥalāl** – *sanctioned, ritually fit; this word roughly corresponds to the word kosher in some of its biblical usage. The word extends over ritual and legal practices.*

**ḥaqq** – *truth, veracity, validity.*

**ḥarām** – *taboo, unauthorized or unlawful; this word is the opposite of ḥalāl.*

**ḥasbunā allāhu wa-ni‘ma al-wakīl** – *Allah is ample for us and what an excellent confidant He is.*

**ḥayā’** – *reticence, discretion, constraint, and moral introversion.*

**Hijrah** – *the forced departure of Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah; in a sense it was the Prophet (ﷺ) securing asylum from the Makkan mushriks and also his assumption of the role of leader, statesman, and ultimate decision maker, or Imam, of the newly established Islamic state in Madinah.*

**hijrī** – referring to the Hijrah, or more generally to the Islamic calendar and the dates organized according to its lunar pattern of timekeeping.

**ḥikmah** – proportionate understanding (of things); wisdom.

**ḥizbullāh** – the party or group (throughout history) that strives and struggles for Allah's (ﷻ) cause.

**‘ibādāt** – acts of compliance; many times reduced or confused with the word rituals.

**iḥsān** – perfection; this is an Islamic word-cum-concept. The idea is to put in the extra effort for completion and culmination of any God-driven and God-ordained task. The epitome and paradigm of this human action-to-perfection is for each person to always be mindful that even if he does not see Allah (ﷻ), he is always seen by Him. Nothing escapes His attention. Therefore, everything someone does has to be done to meet the “higher standards of Allah (ﷻ)” knowing that He is watching.

**imam** – leader; the word has both positive and negative usages in the Qur’anic text.

**īmān** – secure commitment, covenant; the word is virtually a distillation of *amānah* (trust) and *amn* (security).

**infāq** – spending; this is the psychological and social status of persons and people before the terms and conditions of *ṣadaqah* and *zakāh* kick in.

**ins** – human beings; the word means intelligent beings who are characterized by their psychosocial nature that fluctuates between acculturation and naturalness (or between assimilation and ignorance), peculiar to human senses and physical constitution.

**intifādah** – literally, an outpouring, an inundation (like from a flood); mass resistance and protest.

**istibḍā'** – adulterine insemination; a form of marriage in pre-Islamic Arabia in which a woman would conceive the child of a man of higher social status than her husband, so that the child would belong to the social status of the biological “father.”

**al-'izzah** – majesty, self-sufficiency, and self-confidence.

**Jahannam** – Hell; this is the place where evildoers in the world will end up in the afterlife. Its main feature of torment is the fire.

**jāhil** – a constituent or citizen of a jāhiliyah.

**jāhili** – of or pertaining to jāhiliyah.

**jāhiliyah** – an era of governance without God, the age of systemic lack of scriptural guidance; it may be characterized as an “ignocracy” or “idiocracy.” It not only refers to the time preceding Muhammad (ﷺ), but also any time period in which Allah's (ﷻ) *din* is overrun by other systems and establishments.

**janāzah** – funeral preparation and procession for a deceased Muslim.

**Jannah** — the Garden, Paradise; this is the opposite of Jahannam. It is the place and time in the afterlife where people of good heart and will, obedient to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) go to dwell forever in an air of tranquility, an environment of bliss, and a state of exaltation.

**jihad** – the ultimate effort and sacrifice; it is not holy war. The word has a range of meanings and applications that range from a struggle against the forces of evil within the self to the a struggle against the forces of evil within the cosmos.

**jinn** – *unseen, intelligent beings*; this is an independent species of intelligent and advanced life that will be held accountable, like humans, on the Day of Judgment. Their composition is from the substance of the fire, whereas man's composition is from the substance of clay.

**Ka'bah** – *a cubic structure, an object of veneration*; the black enshrouded cube at the center of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, originally built by Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl (ﷺ) and around which Muslim pilgrims perform their *ṭawāf* (circumambulation).

**kāfir** – *a contrarian to Allah (ﷻ)*; every person who enlists in *kufr* becomes a *kāfir*. Plurals are *kāfirūn*, *kāfirīn*, and *kuffār*.

**al-kalimah al-shahādah** – *articles of faith, testimonial*; normally refers to the statement: *Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa Allāh, wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu Allāh*, which means “I bear witness [testify] that there is no deity/authority [worthy of conformity] except Allah, and I bear witness [testify] that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

**khalīfah** – *successor*; this word has its Qur'anic context. In this context man/humans are designated as Allah's (ﷻ) successors on earth. In post-prophetic Islamic literature it refers to those who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ) as the leader of the Muslims.

**al-khilāfah al-rāshidah** – *Rightly-Guided Caliphs*; this is typically identified by Sunnī historians as the short period of legitimate representative Islamic rule following the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) and preceding the first age of repressive, autocratic, and hereditary kings, started by the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. Lasting 30 years, it comprised the administrations, in order, of Abū Bakr (10–12AH), 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (12–22AH), 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (22–34AH), 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (34–39AH), and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, the Prophet's (ﷺ) grandson (40AH) who ruled for six months.

**kufr** – denial of Allah’s (ﷻ) authority and power; such denial ultimately becomes a “philosophy” or an “ideology.” There is a mental construct of ideas that argue against Allah (ﷻ) as Sovereign, Lawgiver, and Authority. There may be many expressions of this contrarian hypothesis and political orientation; but one thing in common among all of them — bar none — is their exclusion of Allah (ﷻ) as the Almighty and the ultimate Authority.

**lā ilāha illā allāh** – there is no deity/authority [worthy of conformity] except Allah (ﷻ).

**al-ladhīna āmanū** – those who are securely committed to Allah (ﷻ); the first among equals in an Islamic society.

**al-ladhīna kafarū** – those who deny Allah’s (ﷻ) authority and power; the first among equals in a *jāhili* society. The term usually refers to the leaders and their enablers who run the homogenizing institutions of *kufr* in society.

**latasma‘unna** – you (second person plural) will most assuredly listen and pay heed to.

**ma‘rūf** – that which is self-evidently right and proper.

**madhhab** – an [Islamic] rational pursuit in fulfilling the meanings of the *Qur’an* and *Sunnah*; usually refers to one of the Islamic *fiqhī* schools of thought.

**madrasah** – an Islamic primary school dedicated in part to the study and memorization of the *Qur’an*; erroneously referred to by the *mushrik* media, politicians, and academics as terror indoctrination centers for young Muslim minds.

**malā’ikah** – angels; plural of the word *malak*. Created out of light, these are living, intelligent beings who are central to the human experience of divine inspiration and revelation.



**marḥūmūn** – those who receive Allah's (ﷻ) mercy; plural of *marḥūm*.

**mārij** – disorder, jumble; refers to the life sustaining proportion of fire and air from which the jinn are created.

**masjid** – the place or area of *sujūd* (prostration); a mosque.

**mazlūm** – one who is oppressed.

**minbar** – pulpit or podium; most of the time, this word refers to the platform from which the Jumu'ah sermon is delivered in the *masjid* each week. In a more general sense, it is just a raised platform to give prominence to the person on it.

**mu'min** – every person who is firmly and securely committed to Allah (ﷻ); a bearer of *īmān*. See *īmān* above.

**muḍārabah** – sleeping partnership; refers to a contract in which a silent partner, who provides cash for an activity undertaken by an active partner, shares in the generated profits according to a pre-existing agreement.

**mujāhid** – an individual active in *jihād*; see *jihād* above. Its plural is *mujāhidūn* or *mujāhidīn*.

**Muhājirūn** – people forced out of their homelands; in particular, these are people who are forced out because of their scriptural convictions, strenuous efforts, and energetic attempts at socializing scripture. Generally in Islamic literature, this term refers to the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions who made the Hijrah from Makkah to Madinah.

**al-Muḥarram** – the first month of the Islamic *hijrī* calendar; it is also one of the four months in which *al-ladhīna āmanū* are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.

**mukadhdhibūn** – liars; plural of *mukadhdhib*.

***munāfiq*** – *dual loyalist*; “Muslims” who are outwardly performing their part in a ritual Islam, but when it comes time to honor this Islam in its struggle and sacrifices, they show inclination toward the anti-Islamic camps, states, or powers around. They feign Islam, while in reality they owe their allegiance to the representatives of *kufr*.

***murābahah*** – *resale with specification of gain*; refers to a contract over a commodity that will be bought back later at a premium, exceeding the original purchase price of the commodity.

***mushārakah*** – *partnership, collaboration*; refers to a partnership agreement in which the investor is treated as an active partner who shares in the profits or losses.

***mushrik*** – *an individual(s) and people(s) who actively diminish the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and promote the authority of others*. They equate worldly powers with Allah (ﷻ) and they denigrate Allah (ﷻ) as “one among many” deities and authorities.

***muttaqī*** – *one who is actively conscious of Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence and hence is always on the alert and on the defensive pertaining to Allah (ﷻ)*; this word should never be translated as *pious* or *fearful*, as it is known nowadays.

***nafs*** – *the bio-self*.

***najāsah*** – *impurity, filth*; opposite of *ṭahārah*.

***Naṣārā*** – *theological Christians or political Christians (defined by context)*.

***naṣr*** – *Allah’s (ﷻ) help in the form of victory over His enemies*.

***nastaghfir-allāh*** – *we ask Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness*.

***ni‘mah*** – *bounty, blessing, favor*.

**nifāq** – disloyalty, hypocrisy, feigning allegiance.

**nu‘ās** – sleepiness, drowsiness.

**qital** – fighting, warring, combat.

**rabbānā** – O our Lord, our Sustainer! This form of address is usually employed in a supplication.

**rahmah** – mercy, grace.

**rak‘ah** – bowing down (during the physical or bodily performance of the ṣalāh); one unit of the ṣalāh, which ends with the rukū‘.

**Ramaḍān** – the ninth month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; the month of fasting for committed Muslims, and the auspicious month in which the Qur’anic revelation to Muhammad (ﷺ) began.

**Rasūl-Allah** (ﷺ) – the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); also called Allah’s Apostle (ﷺ), Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) or simply the Prophet (ﷺ). When this is used in Islamic literature, the majority of times it is in reference to the final messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ).

**ribā** – usury; a particular type of nefarious and vicious financial transaction that generates money from lending money.

**rihlata al-shitā’i wa-al-ṣayf** – commercial winter and summer journey.

**riyal** – a unit of currency used in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Yemen, and Oman; each country’s riyal is valued differently, that is, it is not a common currency like the euro.

**rūḥ** – vital essence, soulfulness.

**ṣābirūn** – those who patiently persevere in adversity; plural of ṣābir.

**ṣadaqaḥ** – *charity*; the act of giving money or wealth without expecting to be financially compensated for it.

**Ṣaḥīḥ(s) of various scholars** – *the compilation of hadiths collected by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, al-Nisā’ī, al-Tirmidhī, and others.*

**Ṣaḥīḥs, the Two** – *the compilation of hadiths collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim; the two most reliable reference books on hadith.*

**ṣalāḥ** – *expressing a concentrated and devotional relationship with Allah (ﷻ); Muslims do this five times a day: Fajr, Ṣuḥr, ‘Aṣr, Maḡrib, and ‘Ishā’.*

**ṣalawāt** –  *blessings*; the meaning of the word depends on the context. The *shar’ī* meaning of the word refers to the plural of *ṣalāḥ* defined above; however the generic or linguistic meaning of the word invokes thoughts close to giving blessings or calling for God’s favor.

**ṣāliḥūn** – *those who sincerely do good works for the cause of Allah (ﷻ), expecting no earthly gratification or reward*; plural of *ṣāliḥ*.

**samāwāt** – *skies, celestial spheres, heavens*; singular: *samā’*.

**shahādaḥ** – *testimonial*; like other words, the variation in meaning depends on the context the word is used in. This word refers mostly to two concepts in Islamic literature. The first is the article of faith: *Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa Allah, wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu Allah*, which means “I bear witness [testify] that there is no deity/authority [worthy of conformity] except Allah, and I bear witness [testify] that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” The second concept related to the word *shahādaḥ* is *martyrdom*.

**shahīd** – *martyr*; plural: *shuhadā’*.

**Shari‘ah** – *legal course; more technically, the codes, procedures, and laws that take society in the direction of prosperity and survival.* The word originally meant — before the Qur’an was revealed — to take a path to a body of fresh water; now it generally refers to the body of Islamic law.

**Shawwāl** – *the tenth month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; the month in which the Battle of Uḥud took place.*

**Shayṭān** – *the Devil, Satan.*

**shayṭānī** – *devilish, scheming, satanic, infernal, fiendish, wicked.*

**shirk** – *the act and implementation of equating or associating others with Allah (ﷻ) as divine and as authority.*

**shūrā** – *a consultative assembly convened for the purpose of participatory decision-making.*

**ṣiddiqūn** – *those who remain true to their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) despite obvious challenges to the contrary; plural of ṣiddiq.*

**Sīrah** – *biography of the Prophet (ﷺ); this is an account of his lifetime, particularly its struggle aspect, during his years in Makkah and Madinah.*

**sunnah** – *social laws.* This is the word’s Qur’anic meaning in so far as such laws are the pattern of history, human activities, and nature. *Sunan* — the plural of *sunnah* — also refers to a compilation of hadith collected and organized by a *muḥaddith*, one who searches hadith literature with a view to organizing and verifying hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ).

**Sunnah, the** – *the lifestyle pattern of the Prophet (ﷺ); or the final set of social laws imparted by Allah (ﷻ) to humanity through the agency of Muhammad (ﷺ).*

**sūrah** – ensemble of a body of themes in the Qur’an; there are 114 sūrahs in the Glorious Qur’an.

**Tābi‘ūn** – the generation of sincere Muslims that came directly after the founding generation of Islam — the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Usually cited in most publications as *Tābi‘īn*.

**tafsīr** – exegesis; simple interpretation or critical interpretation of the meanings of the Qur’an.

**tāghūt** – concentration and abuse of power; this word is usually used to describe governments and regimes that, having accumulated wealth and resources, find themselves in a “superpower” or “hyperpower” position in the world. The exercise of this kind of centralized power makes these governments rivals (in their own consciousness) to the power and authority of Allah (ﷻ). This aggregation and engrossment of power becomes satanic.

**tāghūti** – adjective referring to *tāghūt*.

**tahārah** – purification, hygiene.

**takbīr** – enunciating the phrase “*Allāhu akbar: Allah is the greatest (or greater).*”

**taqwá** – the active self-consciousness of Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence.

**tarbiyah** – education, teaching method.

**uli al-albāb** – those who are privileged with insight, astuteness, and a deep perception of reality.

**Ummah** – (uppercase reference is always to) the Islamic ummah.

**Yathrib** – the (pre-Islamic) name of the city of Madinah before the Prophet (ﷺ) arrived there.

**Yawm al-Furqān** – *the Day of Distinction*; refers to the Day of Judgment (Resurrection Day), as well as the day on which the Muslims were victorious at the Battle of Badr.

**zakāh** – *freely paying money as an act of financial maturity*; usually the word is translated as *almsgiving* or *charity*, which not at all renders correctly its original meaning. Many times in the divine Writ the word *zakāh* is preceded by *aqāma*, *yuqīmūna*..., which means that this giving of money has to be institutionalized or regulated.

**zālim** – *one who does zulm; a tyrant, oppressor.*

**zulm** – *injustice/oppression*; this is the practical result, in human societies, of deleting Allah (ﷻ) as the only Authority and only Power in life. Many times in the divine Writ Allah (ﷻ) refers to *shirk* as being a massive expression of *zulm*. For those who are confused about who the *mushriks* are, they only need to look at parts of the world where there is colossal injustice and identify the operators of that injustice.





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